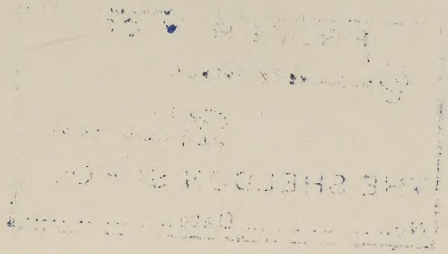
PROPERTY OF
Educational
Division
THE SHELDON SCHOOL
No. 606 Date



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2026

https://archive.org/details/practiceofselfcu0000hugh

THE PRACTICE OF SELF-CULTURE

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

CULTURE AND RESTRAINT
FRIENDSHIP
WORK

THE

PRACTICE OF SELF-CULTURE

BY

HUGH BLACK

STANDARD LIBRARY

BUFFALO, N.Y.
CORLIS COMPANY, PUBLISHERS
1907

COPYRIGHT, 1904,
BY THE MACMILLAN COMPANY.

PREFACE

The author recently published a book on "Culture and Restraint," which was a somewhat philosophical discussion of the two great ideals of self-development and self-effacement, showing the strength and weakness of each and the need for a completer ideal which would include both. Service offers a great reconciling thought which finds room for the two opposing ideals. This present book deals with the practical ways in which the self can be equipped for service. It frankly admits that self-culture is not in itself a complete ideal for human life, but has its place as the necessary education to make a man's contribution to the world worthy. Nothing could be finer as a definition of education than Milton's, "I call a complete and generous education that which fits a man to perform, justly, skilfully, and magnanimously, all the offices both private and public of peace and war."

The author trusts that the title "The Practice of Self-Culture" will justify itself, not from the

point of view of giving many details, but of giving an impulse to practice. The counsels and details are well enough known, but our chief need is to lay hold of a comprehensive scheme into which our efforts will fall easily and the possession of which acts as an inducement. For example, in treating of bodily culture there might well be a paragraph with much good advice about eating and drinking, and another about sleep and the like, but these things, which would be in place in a manual of hygiene, are matters of common knowledge. What we need is the right view of the whole subject, which will make us treat the body sanely and reverently as an integral part of the life. Practical advice does not necessarily mean a list of petty precepts and counsels, but advice that will lead to practice; and if this book gives to any reader some impulse in the great education of life, it will have served its purpose.

A friend who has kindly looked over some of the proofs has suggested that younger readers who might find the first chapter a little difficult should read it last, and should begin with the second chapter.

CONTENTS

PAGE

PREFACE v

I

PROPORTIONAL DEVELOPMENT 1

II

CULTURE OF BODY 35

III

CULTURE OF MIND 69

IV

INSTRUMENTS OF MENTAL CULTURE 97

V

CULTURE AND SPECIALISM 127

VI

CULTURE OF IMAGINATION 153

VII

PAGE

CULTURE OF HEART 185

VIII

CULTURE OF CONSCIENCE 211

IX

CULTURE OF SPIRIT 233

PROPORTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

'I would have his outward fashion and mien, and the disposition of his limbs, formed at the same time with his mind. 'Tis not a soul, 'tis not a body that we are training up, but a man, and we ought not to divide him.' — MONTAIGNE.

CHAPTER I

PROPORTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

THE aim of self-culture is a legitimate one so far as it goes, setting as its ideal the just equipoise of all the nature, the due balance of powers, concurrent growth in all possible directions. True vital efficiency, even bodily efficiency, depends on the harmony of all the varied powers of a man's nature. It sometimes seems impossible to combine the seemingly opposite qualities that go to the make-up of a complete man. It is easy to be one-sided, to specialise in character, to develop a part at the expense of the life as a whole. In practice we see the difficulty of combining such common opposites as duty to self and duty to others, to be wise for self-protection and simple in our relations with men — the ordinary situation which meets us every day in almost every act. The difficulty of life is to live truly and completely, to make the most of oneself, to become the highest character

that is possible. We cannot devote all our attention to one sphere of our nature without the whole suffering, and even that favoured sphere itself being weakened. However difficult it may be, we feel that in the true culture of character the ideal is balance of opposing elements. The complete character must be full-orbed, with no undue development on one side, poised amid the warring forces of human nature, 'below the storm-mark of the sky, above the flood-mark of the deep.'

The fable of a warfare between different functions of the body is a common one in ancient literature, as in the speech of Menenius Agrippa recorded in Livy, and made famous to us by Shakespeare's use of it in *Coriolanus*. The illustration is taken from the various members of the body, each essential for perfect health and life, hand, eye, ear, all dependent on each other and all contributing to the good of the man. It was applied to the body politic to show the need of all grades of society taking their share in the national life and working sweetly and harmoniously for the good of the State. The common weal in all its grades and ranks is a conception which would naturally arise in ancient civic life,

as it does in our modern social conditions. The real organic unity of society is one of the great fruitful truths which should lead the way in practical efforts for the betterment of all classes. St. Paul used the same illustration when teaching the unity of the Church amid its variety of gift and operation and administration. 'The body is not one member, but many. The eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of thee. There should be no schism in the body, but the members should have the same care one for another.' [1] The Church is a social organism, and needs the use of the different forms of endowment and faculty which its members possess. All individual distinctions of gift and of temperament and of attainment, when consecrated by a common faith and love, blend into one perfect life, as the colours of the spectroscope make up the one white light. Each member exists for the good of the whole, and only when each is performing his part can the whole be its best.

The illustration is true for itself in the lower level of the individual, as well as in the wider

[1] 1 Cor. xii. 12–31.

social range to which it was so often applied in ancient literature. After all, we should remember that it was taken from a truth of the personal life, and was applied to the larger life; but the truth has not been exhausted by us even in its lower level. We have not applied it with sufficient vigour and breadth to the whole of our individual life. What is true of the body is true of the man: what is true of the physical side is true of complete human nature. The truth of the illustration needs to be enforced in the narrow sphere of the individual life as well as in the wider sphere of the society. The personal ideal as well as the social ideal is proportional development — many members one body, many capacities one life. The unity of the social organism is a magnificent conception which will bear a great harvest in improved conditions and a deepening sense of corporate responsibility for all the members of the State; as the unity of the Church carries with it great possibilities of comfort and inspiration to all believing men. The unity of the individual life also has vast bearings on thought and conduct, and needs to be emphasised in all consideration of true and full education.

This is the main thesis of this book, which seeks to treat the various divisions of our nature as inseparably related to each other and to the complete life. It proposes to take the common principle of division, accepting the duty and the right of the culture of each power, and at the same time showing the danger of undue development and the need of concurrent growth. Intellect, for example, must not be cultivated at the expense of the affections, and emotion must not entrench upon the place and power of the reason. We know in practice how easy it is in planting and tending a virtue to sow with it its corresponding vice. We need to have some scheme of what human nature stands for, that we may be able to apply it to our own case and see whether we are making the most of ourselves. It does not matter much what classification of the powers we follow. The simplest and the commonest is for practical purposes the best. The common division is that which begins with the body, the physical basis of life, and then considers the mental superstructure built on that, and then the moral and spiritual life.

This is roughly the line we propose to take,

applying in each case our main thesis that there should be no schism in a man's nature, and therefore that all these parts of life merge into each other and affect each other. Naturally in a treatise on self-culture most space is allowed to that of intellect, which usually indeed arrogates the title exclusively to itself. For clearness' sake a special chapter is given to the place of imagination as a special power of mind which asks for separate consideration.

The method of self-culture, which takes ourselves to bits and goes over each part piecemeal, looking after the interests of the various sections, now the development of body and now the claims of mind, is not a complete method, and runs risks from which culture has rarely escaped of a narrowness of its own and sometimes an empty conceit. It suffers also from its subjective method, and too little appreciates the healthy unconcern of the man of action who never stops to inquire within of himself. But anything is better than living at random, making no attempt at any sort of self-knowledge or self-improvement. The surface life is easy enough to lead, living with no definite object, only satisfying instinct when it

becomes imperious enough to compel us, but with no intelligent conception as to what we should be and may be. Ruskin's condemnation of much of our modern life was that it appeared as if our only two objects were, whatever we have to get more, and wherever we are to go somewhere else. This aimless discontent is largely due to the meagre view of human life which comes from lack of a sincere endeavour after self-knowledge.

A large culture which aims at complete self-realisation, seeking the perfection of one's whole nature in a complete unity of character, must be confessed to be rather of the nature of an ideal than an actual reality. Even so, it is something worth striving after; for it will deepen our self-knowledge, make it more fruitful, and show us where are the points of least resistance which need to be strengthened. It is much to know where our weak points are — few men get even as far as that in self-knowledge. They hide their weaknesses from themselves, and never make a frank and candid examination of their attainments. To take stock of our assets sometimes is as wise a thing in life as it is in business. A man has been known

to drift into bankruptcy in business, because he dreads the revelation which a close inquiry into his affairs would bring, and prefers to shut his eyes to the real state of matters. The same half-conscious fear sometimes keeps a man from self-examination, in case he may lay bare to himself the poverty of the land. Only the man who has never examined his own knowledge can plume himself on its sufficiency either in quality or quantity. Rather, the profounder the knowledge, the more does true humility deepen. When we scrutinise our ideas of things — even our common and well-established ideas — we discover how vague some of them are, and how mistaken are others. To bring our powers into self-consciousness immediately creates duty regarding them. This is the practical result of a wise self-knowledge, and explains why culture must begin with it as a method. It seeks to make us take an intelligent view of our various capacities, and so to give us a larger conception of the real opportunities of life. A man who never looks within, and takes as his rule of conduct the accepted standards of his environment, can be very complacent about his attainments. He can leave

large tracts of his nature barren, hardly knowing even that they exist. Thus we find many for whom whole worlds of thought and feeling are shut; some to whom the things of intellect are a closed book, and others to whom the things of spirit are as in a land that is very far off.

A true self-examination is necessary for intellectual progress, as well as for moral and spiritual growth. It need not be, and should not be, the morbid introspection which lowers the whole vitality and weakens effort. That ruins all healthy moral life. The minute search into every motive of an act produces a fertile crop of scruples, and results in a debilitated state of spiritual hypochondria. To watch for every sign of evil, questioning every feeling, tormenting oneself with every fear, is the way to induce some taint and to foster moral disease. It is so in the region of the physical. We have heard of the man who thought he was ill, and after reading a medical book concluded that he had every possible disease mentioned in the book. As he came to the description of each separate ailment, he felt all the symptoms and could locate the pain in every organ. The

wonder was that he was alive at all with such a mass of aches and pains. Spiritual hypochondria can be produced in the same way, by a morbid self-scrutiny that will never let the soul alone, and will insist on recognising the taint in every thought and every motive. A complete and fearless self-examination is a good thing sometimes, perhaps even at stated intervals, but constant and minute introspection only saps the life of its power.

At the same time, self-knowledge is a necessity if we are to have any consistent and wise cultivation of our nature. Self-discipline in every sphere begins with self-consciousness, in the fearless scrutiny of both powers and limitations. The process is not complete until it is lost in self-forgetfulness, as the art which remains self-conscious never approaches perfection; but that same art requires the long discipline in technique and mastery over the methods of work. Similarly, character must ultimately get past the self-conscious stage, though it too must begin by taking itself to pieces to give strenuous attention where it is needed. Thus the method of culture, in spite of the objections, justifies itself practically; for after all we are only able to do things

by sections because of our natural limitations. This explains the constant tendency of thought to divide our life into departments. It is necessary in practice and is right, provided we do not lose sight of the larger whole and remember that no part can be its best without some complete and harmonious development.

It has also to be admitted that the aim of self-culture, as usually stated, is not in itself a sufficient ideal, since its result is to concentrate all care and attention on oneself. It fails even of its own aim of complete development by neglecting the all-important fact, that man is a social being and can only come to his true self by taking his place in the common service of the community. No scheme which concerns itself solely with the individual can be a final one, and self-culture must never forget the strong temptation which besets it to wrap itself up in a disguised selfishness. We can only obviate this by taking a broader view than is common of the sphere of culture itself, as this book seeks to do. To devote all consideration to the development of the intellect may be as essentially dwarfing as to devote it to the training of the body. We smile at the youth who spends much time com-

placently measuring the increase of biceps or calf, and we pity the man who is always thinking of lungs or liver or nerves; but the same sort of one-sided narrowness can be charged against the man who devotes all his attention to this or that mental function in the pious belief that he is growing up into a perfect culture. The fundamental thesis with which we began of the unity of life should keep us right. It should show us the place which the element of social service must have as the groundwork even of our schemes of education. We do this in the chapter devoted to the culture of heart, as the very existence of such social feelings of sympathy and affection implies the duty of their exercise as truly as the existence of intellectual capacity demands opportunities for training.

It is true that in a sense we are doing the best for others when we do the best for self, since we thus bring a richer contribution to the world's life. What we do ultimately depends on what we are; and according to the depth and wealth of our own nature can our value to society be measured. Every highly trained capacity is a possible instrument of social service, and adds to the real possessions of the community. Still,

any individual ideal which gives no definite and conscious place to the claims of society is fatally imperfect, and dooms itself to failure even in its own sphere. To be himself, a man must get out of himself. He must hold all he has for a larger purpose than any self-improvement. At the best, self-culture of all kinds is only like the polishing and sharpening of an instrument to make it serve for the best work. The completest knowledge and refinement of feeling are not for their own sake, any more than physical training is for its own sake. It would be but another kind of selfishness of a more subtle sort to make such an ideal. These are to be sought in order that we may be better qualified for the better service of life. It is well to remember that every gain carries a danger of corresponding loss, and that the very things of which culture should assure us are often occasions of a still more delicate temptation. Every new endowment brings a necessary possibility of its abuse. We are not therefore to shrink from them, but rather to grasp them with firmer hold, knowing the danger and making provision against it as completely as possible. In dealing with the culture of each section of our nature it is the plan of

this book to point out how the exclusive training of a power lays it open to the danger of loss.

Within its own sphere, then, we must recognise the claims of a comprehensive scheme of self-culture, provided it be comprehensive enough. True physical health is reached, when all the organs are in their right condition of dependence and co-ordination, in a state of real harmony. The larger health also is secured when the whole man is symmetrical, when all the elements of his complex nature blend in the unity of life, when body and mind and heart and imagination and conscience and will find their legitimate scope, when intellect is cultivated without starving the emotions and affections, when the outward corresponds with the inward, when the complete life is reinforced not only by an enlightened mind and heart and conscience but also by the higher sanctions of religion. This training of a full and perfect man must be the aim of education. The great task of life lies in the harmonious unity of opposites. We need true proportional development, concurrent growth in the different directions open to us, physical, mental, moral, spiritual. The practical problem

lies in what place to give each function, and how to combine them in the unity of character.

It is no easy task, as we can imagine, for any one to cultivate the whole field of his life. There will be sure to be gaps, some portions overworked and some neglected. To a large extent it must remain an ideal to all of us, but an ideal is useful even when we know we cannot attain it. Indeed if we did attain, it would cease to be the Ideal. It is the experience of all that the firmer a man lays hold of an ideal, the more it eludes his grasp. As he grows in knowledge and insight and moral vision and spiritual attainment, his ideal likewise grows with a more unearthly beauty. Far vistas open up in the moral life as the seeker advances. In any case, even with the confessed failure to realise what the heart sees to be best, it is well to have seen the vision and to have followed after. Wordsworth, in a short preface to his great *Ode to Duty*, in which he had committed himself from that hour to the guidance of absolute duty, confesses that his wife and sister often twitted him with good reason for having forgotten this dedication of himself to the 'stern lawgiver.' There may be some comfort to weaker folk in the knowledge that even the man whose heart

burned and whose eye gleamed at the fair sight of a great ideal should be compelled to admit failure in the harder task of keeping the heights his soul was competent to gain. But whatever failure there may be and must be, who shall say that it was nothing that Wordsworth made his dedication to serve more strictly his ideal and to follow in the wake of a star?

We should encourage ourselves and each other to cherish high aims and to hold out before us great ends. One element of comfort is that we never know what undeveloped and even unsuspected faculties lie dormant in us and in each other. In the education of the young, for instance, how often a new environment, the inspiration of a new teacher, the introduction of a new subject, the contact with a new thought, will give the life a changed bent and enlarge the whole vision. A student sometimes has gone through the whole conventional curriculum listless and unawakened, till he came to a subject that gripped him, and the whole man grew and expanded in the light and heat, and all the purposes of life were transformed. 'What the eye never sees the heart never longs for,' is an Irish proverb with immense truth in this whole region

of education. It enforces the importance of environment, the value of a rich and varied treatment of a child's dawning faculties, opening up possibilities in different lines till one day the soul may wake and grow.

This is the reason why we cannot afford to neglect altogether any side of our nature, and why the different elements that go to the making of a true manhood and a perfect character deserve care and consideration. Artists tell us that nothing needs so many colours for its portrayal as the human face, though to the outsider the mere colour would appear to be the least difficult thing in portraiture. Similarly, many and varied elements are needed for the production of a complete character and life. Many members and one body: many faculties and one personality. If we leave out of account at present the ways in which the bodily nature affects both mind and soul, and look merely at the higher reaches of our being, we must notice how varied the elements are that go to the making of a full human life, and how well balanced and harmonious they must be. Reason and emotion, faith and action, conscience to enlighten and will to initiate, are all needed.

Also, they must be in due proportion held in a rightful equipoise, thought and imagination and sympathy with full play for their activity without any one overshadowing the others — the sensibility that does not weaken the intellect, the intellect that does not dwarf the affections, the affections that do not vitiate the conscience, the conscience that does not unnerve the will, the will that does not misdirect the moral action.

Such an ideal may seem to impose on us a heavy load, but a deliberate and sustained approach to this is the task of life, and without dishonour we are not permitted to lay down the burden of being men. In a sense, however, it is not so hard as it looks; for it is found in practice that it is in some ways easier to attain a many-sided development than an ill-proportioned one. The part is harder than the whole. One function helps another in the complete life; one grace encourages and nourishes another. Excesses or deficiencies of one faculty are corrected by another. The faults of the head are put right by the virtues of the heart, whereas an exclusive attention to intellect will leave the defects of its quality untouched. The excesses of sentiment and sympathy are held in check by reason.

The dangers of a morbid spiritualism are obviated by an enlightened conscience and the moral duties it enforces. Thus, any half measure of culture is really further from the chance of success than the undivided whole. If we look carefully we find that one power slides into another, and that no department is cut off from the rest with clear hard lines.

We are very fond of dividing our life into departments, a tendency which has, as we have seen, a necessity in practice, but we need to be reminded of the underlying unity. We see this even in the theoretic division which is usually made in treating of the mind. The common division of the mental powers is into feeling, knowing, willing; but while the distinction is a real one and can be truly and usefully made, it is only a distinction in function. The three states are never completely separated, but intermingle with each other. Every mental state contains something of each division, even although the preponderant element may be so great that we practically omit the other two elements and call one brain action a thought, another an emotion, another a volition. The highest thought is

always suffused with emotion, and even the coldest and driest thinking has at least some colour of feeling — if it be only a prejudice against emotion in thought! 'The light of the understanding,' says Bacon, 'is not a dry or pure light, but receives a tincture from the will and affections.' On the other hand, an act of will is impossible without some of both the other ingredients. This fact of the inter-relation of knowing and feeling carries with it some practical results that should influence our judgments more effectively than they are usually allowed to do. For one thing, it illustrates the narrowness of all attempts to make one of these qualities the supreme guide of life, as when reason is made the test of all things. Our vital faith, the practical creed by which we live, is dependent on more than the tyranny of reason, and sometimes when there is a conflict between intellect and emotion the heart rightly speaks out in protest, as in Tennyson's lines: —

> If e'er when faith had fallen asleep,
> I heard a voice, 'Believe no more,'
>
> A warmth within the breast would melt
> The freezing reason's colder part,
> And like a man in wrath, the heart
> Stood up and answered, 'I have felt.'

There can be no schism between these essential powers without loss to all. Feeling, thought, and will act and re-act on each other ceaselessly. In our commonest experiences we know how intimate the connection is, when a train of thinking is started by some feeling, and a decision is reached as a result. How often if we analyse some experience we will find that an emotion begat the thought, and the thought blossomed into a determination. There can be no real and effective willing without both some feeling and some thinking. And on the other hand the will can discipline both emotion and thought, can often determine what we shall feel and think, can choose among various courses of feeling and thinking, reject certain natural lines of reflection and deliberately encourage other classes of thought. That is why the will plays such a large part in moral life, and why it is important in any scheme of culture. A man can determine to some extent what thoughts and feelings and imaginations he will harbour in his mind, and to which he gives ready hospitality. It is perhaps this power of will which distinguishes men most; for intellectually concentration of mind depends on it, and morally

often the whole character of a man's inward life. The highest intellectual life will be where these related powers are in harmony, where the emotions are not starved by the reason, where feeling is not permitted to distemper the mind, and where the will is not atrophied by want of use. The heart must be allowed to testify boldly, if need be, against 'the freezing reason's colder part.' What we feel is as true a fact as what we think. To omit this fundamental place of emotion, as so many do in making judgments about religion, is to vitiate their conclusions.

In other and broader ways we often look upon ourselves as a bundle of qualities unrelated to each other in any vital fashion, and give too little thought to the unity of character which should be our ideal. This sense of disunion is probably a necessary stage in education, and certainly it is encouraged by the various forces that act upon us in creating our moral character. We can hardly help feeling as if our moral life were in detached fragments; for we are the fruit of many social influences differing vastly in their effects and in their method of working. We speak of the organic nature

of society moulding men and producing moral results which in their sum we call character; but society is not one invariable force even though we rightly enough call it an organism. In the region of personality and moral life all our analogies from the natural world are only figures of speech, to be interpreted with a large margin of exception and correction. An organism in the animal or vegetable kingdom is a body constituted of various essential and interdependent organs, and while it is true that in a large view society shows an organic structure built up by an indwelling principle of life in the body politic, yet it must be remembered that we cannot define the social organism completely in terms of physiology. In this sphere of moral character we are bound to blunder if we assume that society contains a complete and perfect ethical unity. The fact is that society, though spoken of in the large as one definite and distinct environment, is composed for all of us of various ingredients all seeming to work blindly. When we say that the forces of society play upon us, we must not forget how different these forces are in their nature. They can only be worked up into unity in the unity of our own

life, and this is why an intelligent and comprehensive scheme of self-culture is needed.

Society, for instance, comprises to us such different influences as the family, the Church, the civic conditions, the industrial relations so different in different trades and professions. Even if the home life for all were one consistent influence about which we could speak as of one colour — as, alas! we cannot — there would still be the great variety introduced by the other component parts of society. The best home life presents a type of moral education hugely different from the influences of our ordinary work, which also is expected to be a moral education. A young man beginning life finds it hard to relate the two standards to each other. We cannot be surprised if the various social forces now overlap and now leave gaps in the production of a complete moral character; and we cannot be surprised if in our own experience we are troubled by a haunting sense of disunion within, as though we were made up of unrelated virtues and faults. The standard of the family and that of the Church speak with such different voices from the standard, say, in our commercial or our political life. Yet we feel sure that there

should be no real division, but that our character should be built up in consistency and in unity.

In a very real sense this is indeed so in spite of appearances. A man's life creates in him a distinct character which is compounded of all that he is. We come to feel that there is a root principle, which unifies all his varied experience and gives one colour and tone to his life. In our practical judgment of men we accept this. We may be wrong in our judgment, but that does not destroy the fact; it only shows that from want of adequate data we have made a mistake. When we know a man thoroughly, his strong and weak points, his virtues and failings, we are able to sum up what we conceive to be his character. Much nonsense is talked about the dual nature of man, as if he were two or more persons living within the one tenement of the body, a Dr. Jekyll and a Mr. Hyde, now one and now the other, now kind and now cruel, now high-minded and now base. The truth of this crude statement of life is of course obvious. It is to say that character is complex, as it must be when acted on by such various forces as we have seen. Good in a man has often a very unstable equilibrium, and evil is not enthroned in

unchallengeable power. We see the strangest mixture of qualities in a single man, and the strangest mixture of motives in a single act. There is a soul of good in things evil, and evil clings to the skirts of good. Still, there is a real unity of character which is in process of growing in every man. It is only in the making, but its dominant features are ceaselessly shaping the whole. The two seemingly opposite features of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde are due often to the one root of character. They may be both the fruit of selfishness — now kind and cruel, generous and mean, according to circumstances. The variety has a deep underlying unity of disposition at its base.

This suggests another common way in which we introduce division into our life, by cutting it into sections which we label sacred and secular. It is an even more artificial division, but it has perhaps with most of us far more practical effects. We know from experience how pernicious it may be in life, and how demoralising to religion. We cannot divide our life thus into air-tight compartments, as if what is in one bit could have no dealings with what is in another, as if the sacred side of us had nothing to say to

the secular side, and the secular can be kept from influencing the sacred. It is a vain dream. Our character is all of a piece, and the value of our life must some time or other get down to one common denominator. We cannot cut off a little section and label it sacred, hedging it round from the contamination of secular things. If the sacred is not elevating and inspiring the secular, the secular will assuredly drag the other down to its own level.

Without entering more fully into these common devices we have of creating disunion within ourselves — the common division we make between body and mind to be treated in the next chapter, the division between different functions of the mind itself, the practical division of life into sacred and secular — the great question we have to face is how we are to arrive at real unity, how to reconcile all the diverse parts of our complex life and stand complete without any schism in the life. There is no swift and easy cure-all that can be used like a quack medicine. It can only be done by a process of unification, and the process must be a religious one. There is no other power can do it. Deep

and sacred sanctions of duty must pervade and inspire the practical scheme of self-culture we choose. It is certainly the religious task to bring every power and thought and faculty into relation to religion. We cannot let go any department of our nature as of no account, without suffering loss.

Faith needs reason to stiffen it and protect it, as zeal needs knowledge to steady it and direct it. The intellectual faculties have to be redeemed from waste and failure as well as the other parts of our being. When they are so reclaimed and taken into the service of the highest, the intellectual enriches the whole life of faith. To leave out reason as if religion had no concern with it is to make an irreparable breach in the life, and is as foolish as if the eye said to the hand, I have no need of thee. We hold our faith by a very insecure tenure if we refuse to bring our understanding to bear on it. The apostolic counsel is certainly safer and wiser, to be ready to give to every man a reason for the hope that is in us. In the course of a high argument the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews stops to complain of the slowness and dulness of apprehension of his readers, which

makes it difficult for him to go on with the higher teaching. He cannot explore the profounder reaches of truth, he tells them, because they have not made themselves fit to follow him. When he comes to speak of such deep things, it is as if they had suddenly become dull of hearing, and could not understand his speech. They have remained children content with the rudiments of truth, content to live on milk diet so that they cannot take the solid food he is prepared to give them. And yet, he contends, they ought to have grown up and gone on developing, and should indeed have been in a position to be teachers themselves. If they had exercised their powers they would not now be placidly accepting spoon-meat like children, but would have been full-grown men to whom solid food was natural.

If growth in knowledge and the development of intellect are necessary to understand in a progressive degree spiritual truth, no less needful is the cultivation of the higher emotions. As we have seen, this is true even in the sphere of ordinary thought. Herbert Spencer in the Preface to his *Autobiography* declares that he has shown by his book that in the genesis of a system of thought the emotional nature is

perhaps as large a factor as the intellectual nature. Spencer showed this rather negatively than otherwise; for one of the prominent marks of his life seems to be that he held his emotional nature in perpetual restraint. The sentiments that appealed to him were usually the most abstract, with little blood in their veins. But there is a sense in which the remark is true even of his own work, almost exclusively intellectual as it appears. If true there, it is a hundredfold truer in the range of common human life. The region of feeling lies specially near to religion and cannot be overlooked. The life of the heart is what makes up the individuality of each of us more than even our distinctive intellectual powers. Religion shows her dominant power just here amid the affections and sympathies. Religion bends and shapes the life at the points where feeling flames.

In the same way it can be shown that religion demands the cultivation of imagination, and conscience, and will, and every power and faculty which man possesses. There are many capacities but the one life, and each faculty is needed to make up the perfect unity. The truest religion inspires the cultivation of intellect and

all the higher emotions, and is itself in turn reinforced by their training. Lasting injury is done to character when one of the elements is neglected. Thus the proportional development, which the best culture asks for, is also sanctioned, and even required, by religion.

Many who go with us thus far and assent to all this as a fair ideal for the life of man do not see the further implication of their position which relates to the place of religion itself, the place of the soul, and the innate demand for spiritual culture. If man has a life towards the things below him, he has a life also towards the things above him. Only when he fulfils the true end of his being in that higher life does man truly live. With satiated desire, gratified ambition, intellectual attainment, it is a cramped and narrow life with already the gnawing of the worm in it, if there be in it no fellowship with the divine, none of the faith and hope and love of religion. There is a deadly schism in the life; all our best powers have broken, ragged edges to them, if they are not carried forward and upward into the life of God. The depth and richness of a complete nature are lacking without this higher culture. There can be no true proportional

development, no true balance of power, no true harmony of gift, until they are all submitted in humility and gratitude and loving service to their Giver, who reconciles all the varied capacities and divergent powers of our human nature into one consistent whole.

CULTURE OF BODY

'Perhaps nothing will so much hasten the time when body and mind will both be adequately cared for, as a diffusion of the belief that the preservation of health is a *duty*.'

— HERBERT SPENCER.

CHAPTER II

CULTURE OF BODY

THE common division of man naturally begins with the body, the physical basis of life. Its claim to full culture is one which we must make willingly and gladly, realising the immense part it plays in every region. To neglect duty here is to take away from efficiency everywhere. Any serious derangement of the physical nature maims and distorts every higher function. The Greeks made physical training a science, one of the necessary parts of their scheme of education. The Gymnasium was one of the great centres of a city's life, where especially all the young men gathered. That is why philosophers and teachers frequented them, as they easily and naturally found an audience there. There were three great gymnasia in Athens famous to us, because in one of them Plato taught and Aristotle in another. By their muscular development and their careful

bodily training, the Greek ideal of beauty and dignity and proportion in the human figure remains as one of the great glories of art. We may sometimes think that the cult of athletics is in danger of being carried too far among us, but it is nothing compared to the practice of the Greeks. To them it was almost a half of human education. Every town had its gymnasium, its baths, its racing-track, on a scale hardly conceivable by us. Training of the body was set about on scientific principles, not haphazardly as sports for the pastime of children or as exhibitions for the amusement of spectators. Philosophers gravely reasoned out the due proportion which athletic development should have in the ideal education. Even Plato in his scheme of education sets apart exclusively for 'gymnastic' the years of a young man's life which seem to us the most essential for establishing moral character and intellectual pursuits — those between seventeen and twenty. It was because he took long views of life that he was willing to make this sacrifice of these most precious years. He believed that it would pay afterwards both morally and intellectually.

The many references, casual though they are,

scattered through the New Testament itself give us some indication of the place the gymnastic art held in Greek life. The New Testament never throws contempt on the body, but recommends a wise and sane treatment of it, and even when advocating a higher kind of discipline does not denounce bodily training. It has its uses, it asserts, though these can only be partial, having reference only to one department of a man's nature. All who saw the results could not but admire the perfection of strength and beauty and health which was the result of the classic training. St. Paul more than once points the lesson of self-discipline by a reference to the Isthmian games, the great festival of Greece. Every competitor at these great contests, every one who entered for a race or for a boxing-match, did so after the most careful training and the most stringent discipline. 'Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things,' says the Apostle, asking from his readers for something of the same eager interest and willing sacrifice in the higher race and the nobler fight of life. The training was very severe, and was entered on ten months before the contest. Epictetus gives the rules for the training of an athlete: 'Thou

must be orderly, living on spare food, abstain from confections, make a point of exercising at the appointed time in heat and in cold, nor drink cold water, nor wine at hazard. In a word, give thyself up to thy training-master as to a physician, and then enter on the contest.' No serious competitor could afford to be self-indulgent, and so the training naturally suggested metaphors for self-mastery, the taming of the evil within and harnessing the powers of life to good.

The Greek passion for gymnastic, or what we would call athletics, finds some justification from the facts of life. What the precise connection is between the body and the higher life we need not try to discover, whether in the ultimate issue character depends on the physical nature, or whether the body is the expression of the soul. For a true sense of duty, all we need to know is that the connection is of the closest, between the higher life of intellect and morals and spirit on the one side, and on the other what we are accustomed to think the lower life of the body. We need not accept entirely the fanciful idea of some philosophers and poets, as in Spenser's beautiful lines,

For every spirit as it is most pure,
And hath in it the more of heavenly light,
So it the fairer body doth procure
To habit in, and it more fairly dight
With cheerful grace and amiable sight;
For of the soul the body form doth take;
For soul is form, and doth the body make.

The relation at least is one that cannot be severed, and to try to solve the problem as to which comes first is like the ancient conundrum which Plutarch tells us philosophers discussed, as to whether the hen or the egg came first. For practical purposes, all we need to know is that there is a real and vital connection between the hen and the egg.

Montaigne comes nearer the practical, though some may think that even he is a little fanciful in putting the cart before the horse, when he says, 'The soul that entertains philosophy ought to be of such a constitution of health as to render the body in like manner healthful too; she ought to make her tranquillity and satisfaction shine so as to appear without, and her contentment ought to fashion the outward behaviour to her own mould and consequently to fortify it with a graceful confidence, an active carriage, and a serene and contented countenance. The most

manifest sign of wisdom is a continual cheerfulness.'[1] We do not need to subscribe to what is called the religion of healthy-mindedness in order to admit freely the great and common truth which it emphasises. If courage and hope and trust have a conquering efficacy over some bodily ailments and over some nervous states of mind, while doubt and fear reduce vitality, we know even more certainly the converse side that states of body influence the higher life in all its activities. The common man's philosophy is usually the fruit of his physical temperament. Most optimisms can be traced to a good digestion, and most pessimisms to dyspepsia.

It influences art and literature in ways too subtle always to discover. A very observant doctor mentioned as an interesting fact that the writers of the vulgar and brutal fiction of our day are all in bad health. He spoke from knowledge of some of them, and perhaps he was not far wrong in his diagnosis of all. Certainly one might argue from the unhealthiness of mind to at least bad habits of body. The greatest writers impress us with a sense of the healthy vigour and sanity of their mind. With them we are in a

[1] Essay, *The Education of Children.*

large world, under wide skies, and amid wholesome life. There is no feeling of depressed vitality about them or their work. The morbid and diseased and the tragic side of the world have their place in their interpretation of human life, but always in the natural proportion and from the point of view that health is the normal. Clear vision, and keen insight, and true feeling, and productive energy in all forms of art depend on conditions of health of body and mind and soul. Disease of all sorts reduces vital force, distorts the perspective, and takes away from the power of working. When it invades the sanctuary of the soul it ruins the qualities that go to produce great art. As a fact on the other side in this connection, Emerson in his classification of the different kinds of eloquence has one which he calls animal eloquence, the first quality of which is a certain robust and radiant physical health, and produces its effects by its great volumes of animal heat. It is true that many a man with weak lungs and frail stature has made his mark in oratory through the inward flame that triumphed over the physical weakness, but it has been done at great cost and under severe handicap.

We cannot fail to see that the connection between body and mind is a very close one, and when we note how the one affects the other we must admit that health is a moral duty. The value of health for *happiness* is perhaps only fully appreciated by those who have lost it. We have all known some to whom the finest gifts of fortune were made bitter and valueless through physical weakness. There is, of course, the converse truth that some bodily ailments have their origin in the mind, and sometimes if physicians could minister to a mind diseased, they could cure their patients easily ; but this fact must not make us careless of the equal truth, that depressed bodily functions mean depressed mental functions, and that the man likely to be happy and to live a sane, wholesome life is the healthy man. The connection between health and happiness is a commonplace; at least we easily admit that pain and constant bad health will counterbalance almost any possible gifts of fortune. Carlyle in his Rectorial Address to the students of the Edinburgh University put this in weighty words: 'Finally, I have one advice to give you which is practically of very great importance. You are to consider throughout much more than is done at

present, and what would have been a very great thing for me if I had been able to consider, that health is a thing to be attended to continually, that you are to regard it as the very highest of all temporal things. There is no kind of achievement you could make in the world that is equal to perfect health. What to it are nuggets or millions?'

The duty of a wise care for health is bigger than merely adding an important asset for personal happiness. To a large extent it determines the *efficiency* of our lives. Its results are seen all along the line, giving a bias to our views, and affecting our capacity to work and the quality of our work. Students especially sometimes forget that the brain can be overtaxed, and like an overbent bow may never quite recover from the strain. It often demands from the student great control, and what looks like sacrifice, for him to rigorously follow the rules of health, such as attention to diet and sleep and exercise. He is not interested in physical exercise, and can get up no sort of enthusiasm for games and has none of the sportsman's instinct, while he is intensely interested in his intellectual pursuits. He is absorbed in great studies, the passion of high

thought is upon him, and noble ambitions kindle in his mind. Yet even for the sake of his work in the long run he cannot break these common laws with impunity. Many a man learns after it is too late that he would have been fit for better and more work, if he had always preserved the sane and sensible bearing towards the laws of health and life which experience teaches. We have a proverb which says that a man at forty will be either a fool or a physician, with the evident thought that by that time he ought to have learned the simple elementary rules of health. The trouble is that then it is often too late, or at least mischief is done which hampers a man all his life. No one in these days has any excuse for ignorance of the common practical rules of health. There are many popular medical books on the subject, such as the primers published by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, *Health Series*. Herbert Spencer deals with the subject in connection with children in his *Education*, and there are various manuals of hygiene which give much good practical advice on the management of the body.

Napoleon in one of his letters quoted Fontenelle's saying that the two great qualities

necessary to live long were a good body and a bad heart, the sort of cynical remark which appeals to the coarse-grained man who makes an idol of mere success and defines success in terms of selfishness. We can extract the sting out of the saying and accept the manifest truth it contains, namely, that health is a condition of real efficiency, enabling a man to do his work and expend himself freely in the various lines in which his energy runs. We see at once that any work which requires delicacy of touch or accuracy of calculation or even special energy needs a basis of health. In general life, commercial, political, social, the qualities most prized of initiative and enterprise and resourcefulness, all indeed that we sum up under the head of practical capacity, have their roots in health and strength. 'For performance of great mark it needs bodily health,' says Emerson. 'Sickness is poor-spirited and cannot serve any one; it must husband its resources to live.'

To say that health is a condition of a man's efficiency is more than to say that it will probably lead to success in his business. It should help to make him a man of a more all-round character, since character is formed, as Goethe says, in the

stream of the world. Of course there have been exceptions. Many men have done magnificent work who have been handicapped by a delicate constitution, but they would be the first to admit that it has been a handicap. They could not enter the race on fair terms. It is worth while remembering the exceptions, if only for the sake of those who know that they are not like Samson for strength, and who may have to contend against much weakness. Even here, wise care will enable one to get through much work, and will even build up a fairly comfortable margin of strength. Gibbon, who had very weak health in youth, tells us in his *Memoirs* that his constitution was so feeble and his life so precarious that in the baptism of each of his brothers his father's prudence successively repeated the Christian name of Edward, that in the case of the departure of the eldest son this name might be still perpetuated in the family. Till he was nearly sixteen he was a most delicate boy, but thereafter his constitution became fortified, and all the world knows how much he was enabled to perform in his life, largely because, as he says, he never possessed or abused the insolence of health. Something of the same is true of Julius Cæsar, of Calvin, and of

many other great men who triumphed over much weakness of body. It is proof of the supremacy of the soul that the sick body can sometimes be made to do its bidding. But even if the sickness does not bring some taint of the morbid or perverse, that bidding would be done more easily and perfectly under conditions of health.

Charles Kingsley with his healthy body and sane mind taught his generation a useful lesson to treat the physical side of life wisely and reasonably. He himself attributed part of his success at Eversley to the natural and easy way he could be all things to all men — could swing a flail with the threshers in a barn, turn his swathe with the mowers in a meadow, pitch hay with the haymakers in the pasture, as well as show sympathy with all manly sports. In a letter from Eversley he declares that there has always seemed to him something impious in the neglect of personal health, strength, and beauty, which some religious people of his day affected. 'I could not do half the little good I do here if it were not for that strength and activity which some consider coarse and degrading. How merciful God has been in turning all the strength and hardihood I gained in snipe-shooting and

hunting, and rowing, and jack-fishing in those magnificent fens to His work.'

Apart from efficiency in work, *mental* and *moral* qualities are affected when the state of the body is abnormal. As on the one hand self-indulgence produces slackness of fibre both physical and mental, so bodily states influence our higher capacities and colour our views. Moral qualities cannot be dissociated from physical results. The most intellectual life, or the most spiritual life, proceeds upon a physical basis. In a word, life is a unity; and if the materialist makes a fatal error in leaving soul out of account, so the spiritualist makes a fatal error if he leaves body out of account. 'Conceit in weakest bodies strongest works,' says Shakespeare. Morbid or capricious judgments about things are more likely to be had from the men of irritable nerves, than from the robust and wholesome nature. Not that all deep-chested and strong men must be models of wisdom, nor that any who cannot come up to the standard of a health inspector can have no chance to become wise. Here too there have been many exceptions on both sides. Pascal was always a weakling, and even made himself more so by his religious

austerities; and to many a man pain has been a school of the profoundest wisdom. We must remember that it is always easy to overrate the physical. It is the first thing we note and the one thing we can easily mark. Some of the noblest men have been among the class of invalids. Some of the finest specimens physically have been among the meanest and basest. Sympathy, tenderness, and insight have come to many a man through suffering; and nothing is so irritating as the easy and joyous platitudes of the deep-chested type who have never known any sort of pain or tribulation. Many a man has been able to say with the Psalmist, 'It is good for me that I have been afflicted that I might learn Thy statutes.'

At the same time, speaking in general terms on this subject, we must stand for a sane and wholesome physical nature as the ideal, from which at least to expect a well-developed character. The old adage is a true one, *Mens sana in corpore sano.* The highest functions of life can only be adequately performed in health. Perhaps there never was more necessity for the enforcement of this truth than to-day, when such multitudes live in cities, and when so much

of our work is of a sedentary or confining character. The ever-increasing demands of industry make a drain on all the resources of our life, and ask for complete fitness not only in body and mind, but also in the subtler region of character, and we cannot afford to neglect any element that makes for efficiency.

This is often treated as if there were some sort of degradation in admitting that so much of the higher reaches of life depend on such trivial things as exercise and the right management of the body generally. Rather, we should take it as an evidence of the sacredness of all parts of our nature. If we are wise we will accept the fact of the relation of body to the highest life, and will treat it accordingly. It will help us to solve some of the practical problems we all meet in the conduct of life — the whole question of recreation and amusement, for example.

Some sort of *recreation* is necessary in the interests not merely of the body itself but of the whole man. The bow must be unstrung if it is to retain its elasticity. For the mind's own sake there must be diversion, and while variety of mental work itself gives some diversion, yet the most complete recreation for all whose work is

sedentary and intellectual is some form of physical exercise. *Per contra*, the best recreation to those whose work is largely manual consists in some intellectual pursuit. Not only is it the best, but it is absolutely necessary if a man is to retain the highest qualities of his manhood. The most effective recreation is certainly that which is in contrast to our regular employment. Every one will admit that a moderate amount of exercise in the open air is good for body and mind. The encouragement of athletics given to-day in schools, by the press, and by the whole tone of public opinion, is in some respects a good sign of the times. We may have grave doubts about the 'cult of the arena,' where thousands of people crowd together round a field to watch a select number of professionals perform in a game; though even that is not to be indiscriminately condemned, as there are many more unhealthy ways in which masses of our young men could spend some of their leisure time. Outdoor pursuits and open-air sports have their legitimate place and do something to preserve the national efficiency we hear so much about. Physical exercise and fresh air will increase and preserve the health and happiness of our town populations.

A man who is physically fit is surely all the better citizen. No sensible man would like to reduce the opportunities in this line open to our clerks and artisans.

We are coming even to see how qualities that may be classed as moral may be encouraged in children by their very games. The most popular games for boys have been recognized as doing more than giving opportunities for health. They teach lessons that may well be called moral, self-reliance and yet self-restraint, good temper in defeat and moderation in victory, steady resolution, and the value of combination. The perseverance and energy and generosity which games can teach boys make no small contribution to their training for life. The value of drill to boys is something more than the mere physical training received by it. It is calculated to awaken a sense of comradeship, and with it a subordination to the good of others. It teaches habits of self-control and thoroughness and exactness, and helps to root out the inborn tendency of what Rudyard Kipling calls 'doing things rather more or less.'

This ideal of physical culture is a far-reaching principle, which should have great results both for the personal and for the social life. It is at

the basis of all education, and the sooner and the more completely we recognise this, the better will it be for our social conditions. The rules for the care of children are in a sense well enough known, but the observance of them is not in keeping with our knowledge. They are—plenty of good air, simple food, suitable clothing according to the season, and enough exercise. The most important of these, because it is the one most neglected, is the first, which really in a sense includes the last. The way in which otherwise sensible people poison children by stuffy houses and musty schools is past speech. How can we expect children to be bright of intellect in deadly schoolrooms full of impure air? With a little more wisdom also the demands of education could be made to harmonise better with a child's physical fitness, taking care that the nervous system is not exhausted; and better methods of education could be introduced, with less cramming and other stupid ways in which vanity encourages infant precocity. If parents and teachers fully realise how mental states are affected by physical health, there will be less of the unreasonable chastisement, which made Rousseau say when writing about it after fifty years that the memory

made his pulse quicken still. This ideal of physical culture must take a larger place in all legislation, and through it the standard of health for the community will be raised. It will mean an increased importance to be attached to the physical well-being of all the people, in conditions of labour, in housing of the working classes, in facilities for recreation, in opportunities for leisure.

At the same time, while we gladly admit the importance of all this side of life, we must take care that athletics do not take an undue place, as if they were an end in themselves and not just a means to something larger. The mere idolatry of muscle that is so common in many quarters is anything but a good sign of the times, and is of a piece with the view of life which eliminates the spiritual. One must make allowance for the boyish crazes which pass over a community, when every youth spends long time solemnly examining his biceps: and one must also make allowance for the youthful enthusiasm which makes a hero of the captain of the football team — and very often he is a hero in school life. But the

danger to which we refer has much more widespread roots than that. A considerable section of our people is taken up with sports and games. These seem to be the first thing in their lives. Bodily exercise is made to profit everything; and if you take that away there is practically nothing left. The things of the intellect and the things of the soul have little or no place; and even the things of ordinary business suffer. At least employers sometimes say that with some of their young men, the one important thing is their sport — football, or baseball, or golf.

From what has preceded in this chapter, it will be understood that nothing here is written with sour and narrow prejudices, which would condemn such innocent and even necessary recreation. But it is a poor life which has no deeper and higher concern. If we get the right perspective, bodily exercise will fall into its true and legitimate place. Its place is to give a perfect instrument for the play of our higher energies. It was never meant that a man with all his Godlike endowments should spend all on the outside of life, with no interests above the body and the things of the body. The mere athlete, however highly trained, is an incom-

plete person. Said Epictetus, 'It is a sign of a nature not finely tempered to give yourself up to things which relate to the body; to make a great fuss about exercise, about eating, about drinking, about walking, about riding. All these things ought to be done by the way; the formation of the spirit and character must be our real concern.'[1] Some of us make a great fuss about such things, and have no time or thought for anything else. Bodily exercise does profit for some things, but it has its limits, and the limits are soon reached.

In itself it cannot even save the physical life; for our nature is a unity, and each part suffers from loss elsewhere. If it is true that a healthy body influences mind and soul for good, it is also true that a healthy mind has its good effect on the very body. Goodness is profitable for all things, for the body as for the soul, for the life that now is as well as for the life that is to come. This is no theory merely, but a well-established fact of experience. A happy mood of mind, a sweet and simple piety, a generous desire to help and serve others, will encourage and strengthen health in ourselves. Faith re-

[1] *v.* Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy*, chap. 1.

news youth like the eagle. The merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance. Peace of mind, a good conscience, a gentle, generous, unselfish heart are all great elements of health, just as anger and excessive grief and hatred tend to destroy vitality. If we would be true and complete men, we must have another sort of exercise in addition to any physical training. Plato, who made so much of the necessity of bodily training, says, 'Excessive care of body beyond the rules of gymnastic is most inimical to the practice of virtue,' and after all, his interest in the one was because of his concern for the other. We must consider more than health, if we would fulfil the end of our being. We must aim at true proportional development, which will sometimes demand the good of the whole, even at some self-sacrifice in the region of the physical. We must exercise the higher part of our nature, and most of all must give scope to the highest part of all. There is a gymnastic which must take precedence. Noble and virtuous life — not bodily development, nor even mental culture by itself, nor happiness — is our being's end and aim. Without this we are stunted and dwarfed, never attaining what we ought to

become, never approaching the stature of the perfect man. No development in the lower reaches of life can make up for failure in the higher. Bodily exercise cannot profit for everything, and can at the best profit only for a little. By itself it leaves a man one-sided and distorted. Its true place is to cultivate the body as an instrument for a complete character. Even when we follow after lower things and give our hearts to unworthy aims, we know that goodness alone counts: we know that the men and women who truly succeed in life, are those who succeed here. However much we may be spending our strength for that which profiteth not, we know in our heart of hearts that goodness alone is profitable for all things and for all worlds.

The right view of this subject will only be reached by laying firm hold of the principle which runs through this book, of the unity of the personal life. The body must be treated as an integral part of human nature, not as a foe to all that is best in man, a foe to be buffeted and kept under. The true relation of the body to the higher life of mind and soul is not one of mutual antagonism. To think of man as pure

spirit, even in theory, is folly, and leads to endless error. Even the abstract separation of spiritual and material can serve no useful purpose, and must always incur some serious dangers. It is futile to regard the bodily functions as something quite apart from the mental functions, as it is futile to speak of our personality as if it had no intimate connection with the body. We have large evidence of the inter-relation of mind and body, the reaction on each other of moral and physical states. This close connection is admitted, though even now we do not give it its full weight in affecting conduct. Though we may make distinctions in our nature for convenience of speech, yet these distinctions are largely artificial. We cannot cut up the being of man in sections, as if there could be an intellectual life that had no basis in the physical, or as if there could be a life of the soul with no relation to the life in the flesh.

If we have such a conception of unity in our nature, it follows that we can leave no part of man outside our consideration, as if it did not count. Education is seen to be more than a mere brain development; it is the total forming of a human being, physical, intellectual, moral, and spiritual. It is, no doubt, sometimes humiliating

to us to feel how much we are affected by our physical state. It makes us almost despise ourselves, bound as we seem to be to the body of this death. But for good or ill it is so. All divisions of man's nature must be confessedly inexact. All talk about religion being of the soul, and sin having its seat in the body, is false. The body in itself is morally neutral and colourless. All sins of the flesh are sins of the soul. We may locate the manifestation, but the evil is deeper than the surface. To parcel out the nature of man in the common way, to separate the body from the soul except in a popular and general fashion, invariably ends in error according to which side the stress is laid.

On the one side it becomes rank materialism, which places life frankly on a physical basis. Virtue, if it is taken into account at all, is resolved into health of body merely. It means the virtual denial of the soul. Now, this practical materialism owes its place and power to a natural protest against a false mysticism. It is only of modified value even as a protest; for it also neglects the facts of human life. Man is man not through that which he has in common with animals, but that which distinguishes him

from them. It asserts the great truth that wholesomeness of body is necessary for wholesomeness of mind, but is blind to the converse truth that life has a moral as well as a physical basis.

Extremes meet. Side by side with this materialistic error, and due to the same initial mistake, there is a religious error. St. Paul's metaphor from the pugilistic ring, 'I keep my body under,' or smite it, has been used to support all the mediæval ascetic disciplines, from pillar-saints and flagellants who lashed themselves with whips, down to the milder forms of self-torture, and indeed the whole Roman monastic system. It is stupidly prosaic to interpret the words in this literal way. St. Paul was no doubt thinking of the physical hardships which he had endured, all the bodily afflictions that had been laid on him in the course of his great work, but it is to be noted that there was nothing of the self-inflicted kind of discipline in his life. When he used the metaphor, he was advocating not a system of penance, but the need of self-control. The root of this religious error is that it looks on the body as evil, essentially and hopelessly evil, and the only chance for a man is to renounce

it. There must be no truce in the great warfare between sense and soul. Men were driven into the desert to starve and scourge the sinful flesh that the spirit might thrive. How common this notion of some sort of self-torture is can be seen from the Lives of the Saints. So much so, that the special religious method seems to be self-torture. They keep the body under and bring it into subjection, buffet it like the boxers in the Isthmian games. The ideal seems to be mutilation of the physical powers, that the life may be purified by pain, and sin expiated by suffering. The ideal is to detach the affections from all that is of the earth, though the roots bleed as they are torn up, to pluck out the right eye, and cut off the right hand. The method seems to get some support from the example and the teaching of every religious genius of the race.

And yet the method throughout the whole history of the world has been a ghastly failure. Life cannot be saved by a process of eviction. The untenanted house of life lies open for sevenfold more devils to inhabit. It is a mistake to assume that the best way to strengthen the higher nature is to weaken the lower, and that spiritual life will grow rich and strong in pro-

portion as physical vitality is lowered. The body is part of man, and is no more inherently sinful than is the mind or the heart. Indeed, our Lord in His diagnosis of sin declared that from within, from the heart of a man, proceed the baneful brood of sins. Thus it follows that there may be the complete ascetic discipline, without touching the seat of sin and without gaining any real mastery over the life. Our physical nature does not exist merely to be trampled upon and buffeted. The body has rights, and we have duties towards it. It is to misrepresent St. Paul to make him in any way an advocate of ascetic methods. He did teach self-control and self-denial, as every religious teacher must do, but he did it in the interests of the self-reverence which has little place in the ascetic creed. The folly of thinking that it does not matter what is done to the body is too evident for much argument. After all, the body is the life-long companion of the mind, and it cannot be unimportant how it is treated. It is through the body that the mind and the spirit gather their stores of impressions, and through the body they enact their will and perform their functions. Mental vigour and spiritual insight are only acquired by means of

the physical side of life. Sometimes, it is true, the soul seems to be seen most brightly shining through the chinks of a weak body, but never if the weakness is due to self-inflicted injury.

Repression, as a mere negative method of dealing with the physical life, keeping the body under, despising it, throttling its instincts, cannot really solve the problem. Yet it must be asserted that while no life can become truly great by repression alone, also no life can become great without it. We never can get away from the necessity for self-denial. The body must be brought into subjection, and a foot put upon the neck of all animal passion. This is the eternal truth of religious discipline. But the distinction between this and the ascetics is simply that this never looks upon it as a thing to be done for its own sake, as if there were any merit in bodily austerities, while the ascetics make repression an end in itself. Self-control is necessary for the highest development of the body itself. The athlete in training must deny himself ceaselessly: if he does not deny appetite he cannot bring himself into fit condition. Much more is self-denial necessary for spiritual training. The soul cannot be saved with self-denial

merely, yet it cannot be saved without it. The mistake of the ascetic is that he raises into an end in itself what should only have a place as a means. Discipline is not for its own sake: it is needed for the sake of the body as well as for the sake of the soul. True bodily culture implies discipline — chastity, temperance, self-control. Culture means harmonious development, and that at once condemns excess of all kinds. All moralists, even Epicurus, admit this. The thought at the root of self-culture is completeness, balance of powers; and the aim is total self-government. One unbridled passion is enough to destroy the beauty of life. One excess, if it does no more, can mar the grace and harmony of the whole. 'He that striveth for the mastery must be temperate in all things.' He will need to be watchful at the weak places, his heart knows where; watchful at the points of least resistance. Repression and self-denial there must always be. A man, to be a man, must have his nature under the curb and must be master of his life.

But the way to keep the body under is to live above it, to have a life of the soul that will use the body as its willing servant. A

deep religious sense of the sacredness of life will alone give us the adequate motive for self-mastery. Novalis said that we touch heaven when we lay our hand on a human body, referring to the sacredness of man as the image of God. The Christian faith sets new sanctions on the physical life. It is opposed both to the ascetic hatred and despising of the body in the affected interests of spirituality, and equally opposed to weak yielding to every animal impulse. The body is sacred and must be treated sacredly. We must feel the tremendous moral motive introduced into life by a sense of the body's high destiny. There has been no power for personal purity like it in the history of the world. The Christian method is not repression, but *consecration.*

CULTURE OF MIND

'Culture is as necessary for the mind as food is for the body.' — CICERO.

CHAPTER III

CULTURE OF MIND

THE aim of culture, as we have seen, is the perfected development of the whole man. The existence of a power or capacity implies duty to make the best of it. A sound mind, trained to form wise judgments, able to consider serious subjects and to reach reasonable conclusions, is part of the equipment of a true life, and may be one of the best servants of religion. Religion has sometimes distrusted the purely intellectual way of looking at things, and with cause has opposed the arrogance of reason claiming the sole right of judging. But not even the most obscurantist form of religion can deny that we possess not only the right but the duty to strive after education of mind. It must be the will of God that the mental faculties should be trained and developed. It cannot possibly be right to mutilate the powers of intellect granted to us. To despise thought is not only foolish but sinful;

for thought is the medium of all truth. Religion, so far from despising thought, concerns itself with the largest thoughts and the noblest ideas that can enter into the mind of man. Knowledge is the food of thought, and the purpose of all religion is to give man the knowledge of God. The greatest foe of religion is not knowledge but ignorance, not reason but superstition. 'My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge,' says the prophet Hosea — a word that is echoed in all the prophets. To give up reason is to give up being men. More, to give up reason is to give up God; for the world is built on reason.

God has given us reason, and to despise the gift is to despise the Giver. If we are required to renounce reason, we may ask why we should not also renounce faith. If it is right to trample on one human faculty, there can be no inherent objection to trample on other faculties. If reason can be rightly sacrificed, why may not emotion, good feeling, charity? Should men give up tenderness of heart, the sacred pity that makes the world a gracious place? The mind is liable to mistakes, but so also is the heart. Men have abused pity and love in the interests

of what they deemed truth. The inquisitors must some of them have made a painful sacrifice of their humane feelings, and yet we do not defend their conduct. No plan of life can be a true or complete one, which does not give a place to culture of the mind. A perfect scheme will not limit itself to mental education, but it cannot neglect it. For the sake of the mind we cannot neglect the body, and for the sake of the soul we dare not neglect the mind. 'I consider,' says Addison, 'a human soul without education like marble in the quarry, which shows none of its inherent beauties till the skill of the polisher fetches out the colours, makes the surface shine, and discovers every ornamental cloud, spot, and vein, that runs through the body of it. Education after the same manner, when it works upon a noble mind, draws out to view every latent virtue and perfection, which, without such helps, are never able to make their appearance.'

The first danger which mental education meets is due to the fact that it comes second in time and is therefore inclined to be too long delayed. Perhaps this is why Plato, in his conception of the ideal republic, makes education begin with

music, which in his definition includes literature, and makes gymnastics come later — music for the soul and gymnastics for the body — and the soul first.

'What shall be their education? Can we find a better than the traditional sort? — and this has two divisions: gymnastic for the body, and music for the soul.'

'True.'

'Shall we begin education with music, and go on to gymnastic afterwards?'

'By all means.'

'And when you speak of music, do you include literature or not?'

'I do.'

'You know,' I said, 'that we begin by telling children stories which, though not wholly destitute of truth, are in the main fictitious; and these stories are told them when they are not of an age to learn gymnastics.'

'Very true.'

'That was my meaning when I said that we must teach music before gymnastics.'[1]

As a nation our progress in material things has outstripped our progress in intellectual, and as

[1] *Republic*, ii. 376.

individuals physical culture comes before mental; but in both cases the former should only be a foundation for the latter. Most young men have more muscle than brains, more strength than ideas — which is to some extent natural. Some few have to be warned against incessant mental overwork, but on the whole the greater number need to be driven on, or tempted on, to begin serious thought of any kind.

If the relation of education to the mind is like that of food to the body, we do not often take anything like the same care to give the mind its right food as we do to nourish the body. Even in the matter of reading, which is an acknowledged instrument of mental training, it is seldom seriously treated as such, and is much more commonly used as a means merely of relaxing the mind. There is milk for babes in mental things as well as in physical and spiritual, and many never seem to find any need for stronger food. The powers of mind can be atrophied by want of use, leaving the mind wayward and undisciplined. We must learn to take this as part of our religious duty, for we are false to our complete endowment as men if we have no sense of duty here. We have a glorious heritage,

and if we wilfully refuse our opportunities and cut ourselves off from the inner life of our race we are impoverishing ourselves. It is never a small thing for a man to pass under the influence of the master minds, to feel the spell of the rarer spirits of the world, to come within the humanising sphere of great writers and thinkers. It is much to be saved from the paltriness and sordidness of ordinary life by the infusion of intellectual tastes.

We are called to undertake cultivation of the rich fields of life, and that implies the care and method and toil of the husbandman. The power of concentrated thought is only got through long sustained use. Reason does not come by spontaneous generation any more than life does. Reason is the crown of intellect. The 'dry light of reason,' as Bacon calls it, is not struck off as a spark from flint and steel. It has to be refined and super-refined, and passed through rarer and rarer media, till it becomes a light dry, and clear, and pure, fit to examine the world by. Wisdom is knowledge organised into life. Even the more evident fruits of culture, such as taste for what is beautiful and true in art, or the feeling for

style in literature, are capacities which come from training, and at last almost become an instinct.

Now, the same natural impulse which makes men enjoy exercise of body makes them enjoy exercise of mind. There is a certain innate sluggishness to be overcome at first in both cases. A man who for years has been slack will have a good deal of *inertia* to overcome before he can bring himself to enjoy even moderate physical exertion — but it can be done; and a man whose mind has been mostly fallow ground will not easily take to the mental plough and hoe; but when he does persevere he will find the natural law operate on his side, the law which ordains joy for the sweat of the brain as well as for the sweat of the brow. It is no lowering of the standard to speak of pleasure in intellectual pursuits; for it has been ordained that the legitimate and uncorrupted use of all our natural powers should be accompanied with pleasure. And the higher the power, the purer the pleasure, as if to tempt us on to nobler things. The pleasures of mind are keener and more lasting than the more material pleasures. More lasting; so the young

man without intellectual interests is preparing himself for an unhappy old age. But effort is essential before pleasure is possible. For the athlete's joy, the joy of a strong man to run a race, one must toil terribly in the training. For the scholar's joy, one must 'scorn delights and live laborious days.'

The real training of any part of a man's being is its own reward. It remains a possession. In the region of the mind we recognise a cultured opinion when we hear it. It is the fruit of thought, the result of a broad way of looking at things. It is not a trick of manner to be caught by watching, but comes from serious effort and honest toil. The habit of exact thought, if it is to be a habit and not an occasional accident, is only got through discipline. This is not something outside religion. Failure here is failure to grasp the religious significance of all life. Emerson speaks of the innocent men who worship God after the tradition of their fathers, but whose sense of duty has not extended to the use of all their faculties. The spirit's work on us of power and love is often hindered and marred for lack of the sound mind. Most of the mistakes of sincere religion are due to the

lack of it. All the instruments of religious deepening, such as prayer, praise, meditation, need this element to enrich their contents and to guide their direction. St. Paul with his vigorous, robust intellect argued against an unintelligent use of religious gifts among the Corinthians. 'If I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful. What is it then? I will pray with the spirit and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with the understanding also.' As for our religious meditation, much of it is mere idle dreaming — vacancy of mind, not thought. We must confess to ourselves how little we indulge in the habit of consecutive thinking. When we give ourselves time to think it often ends in mere vacuity, or we discover that our minds have been vagrant, wandering hither and thither like a stray horse without bit or bridle. What we call thinking is aimless and spasmodic, developing nothing, going nowhere in particular; so that after a time of meditation, if any one asked us what we were thinking on, we would have to confess that we did not really know.

Yet what traitors we are to our race by our

neglect! We hang broken branches on the tree of life, examples of arrested development; for the physical side of life seems to have come to its destined end, but there is no limit to evolution in the higher spheres. The bounds of knowledge can be extended infinitely. In the realm of nature, in the world of thought, there is no end to the task set to man. That task is to conquer the world and make it his own; not merely to occupy and develop its material forces, but to understand it, to learn its secrets and its lessons. It is humiliating to think how little we have made the world our own by knowledge, by sympathy, by understanding. To few of us come opportunities for original research, but to all of us come opportunities for exercising our minds and gaining power to make true judgments, and growing in power and love and a sound mind. We need not fear in the interests of truth reverent inquiry, and scholarship, and increase of knowledge. Rather, we have to fear lethargy of mind, intellectual and moral indifference, the materialistic life which judges truth by utility, and which makes utility mean increased profit or pleasure.

The practical benefits in life of a cultivated

mind are too many even to mention. Foremost among them is the fact that thought gives a quality of abstraction which makes the little things appear little. It gives a fine insight into the value of things and settles their relative importance, and should therefore be to us the necessary corrective of our common commercial standards. It would keep us from the vulgar judgment of men according to rank or wealth, and from the vulgar judgment of things which sacrifices beauty to utility. Intellectual pursuits will at least save from absolute bondage to the material side of life. To enlarge the number of our interests creates a new standard of judgment by widening the whole outlook. It would be well for us as a community, as well as individuals, if we had a more general mental culture. Questions would not be so much settled by prejudice and party passion. We would, for example, not have so many crude and wayward experiments in education; for we would see education to be the great question of home politics, and would not permit it to be the butt of party and the game of sectarian ambition.

But most of all may be emphasised to young men the moral value of intellectual pursuits.

If we would keep the body under, we must live above it, and that means practically that we must have interests above the body. It is not merely that a man may thus be saved from the freakishness and follies —

> Such as take lodgings in a head
> That's to be let unfurnishëd,

but he will also to a large extent be saved from the fierce assaults from an evil environment and from his own evil passions. Purity of heart and mind is not a negative state: it is an active state of love for what is pure and true and beautiful. When the city of Mansoul is besieged and the fight presses sore, we dare not leave any entrance undefended; and when we are hard bestead by an overmastering sin, a besetting temptation, one strategical move, approved of by all masters of this craft of war, is that we must not be content to strive and pray and resolve: we must garrison the mind with noble thoughts and pure desires. 'Not the mouse but the hole is the thief,' is a Talmudic proverb condemning the receiving and purchasing of stolen goods. Leave not a hole in the defence for even a mouse to creep in at. The empty mind is the devil's opportunity. Many of the

sins of youth get their force through emptiness of mind and lack of any sort of intellectual interest. How can a man expect to be saved from the seductions within and without, if he have no higher resources, if he have no interests that claim his mind when his daily work is done? Hugh Miller in *My Schools and Schoolmasters* tells how he was able to pass the critical point in his life with regard to the huge drinking-customs of his early trade as a mason. The men were treated on all sorts of occasions, and on this special time, at the laying of the foundation-stone of a large house, they were all treated to whiskey; and when the party broke up and he got home to his books, he found, as he opened the pages of a favourite author, that he could not master the sense, and the letters were dancing before his eyes. He writes: 'I have the volume at present before me — a small edition of the Essays of Bacon, a good deal worn at the corners by the friction of the pocket; for of Bacon I never tired. The condition into which I had brought myself was, I felt, one of degradation. I had sunk by my own act for the time to a lower level of intelligence than that on which it was my privilege to be placed;

and though the state could have been no very favourable one for forming a resolution, I in that hour determined that I should never again sacrifice my capacity of intellectual enjoyment to a drinking usage; and with God's help I was enabled to hold by the determination.' He conquered by his love of intellectual pursuits, and his experience is not an uncommon one.

In our next chapter we will deal with the practical instruments of culture, the common means of attaining this elevation of mind; but in pursuance of our plan of treating our nature as a unity, it is necessary to take note of the serious limits to the claim of intellect to dominate life. We ought to admit mental limitations as we do physical. The life is more than meat, and it is also more than mind. Exclusive attention to mind is one-sided and defeats the true ends of culture. The life has higher functions than even the mental. Even from the point of view of education, brain development is not everything. Intellect, for example, can harden the heart as effectually as sense can. Intellect needs a high ideal to save it from itself. It must be in the service of

conscience and heart, or it is degraded into a mere caterer to the material side of life. Intellectual selfishness can be as hard and cruel as any other form of selfishness. The loftiest thoughts and the most intellectual pursuits will not in themselves save a life from emptiness. If any one lived the intellectual life almost from his very infancy, it was John Stuart Mill, and yet in his *Autobiography* he tells us how futile he found it even in early life. He asked himself: 'Supposing that all the objects of your life were realised, and that all the changes in human institutions and opinions which you desire were completely accomplished at this very moment, would it be for you a great joy and happiness? My conscience replied to me directly and irresistibly, No. At this response my heart failed me; all the foundations on which my life was built were destroyed.' In spite of knowledge and learning and gratified intellectual ambition, he felt the poverty and vanity of a life that had no more in it than that. The pathway to the higher life is not through the portals of mind. The mind tempered to a fine keenness may have taken on a hard, cold glitter. For the ordinary conduct of life there comes

into play other elements for true success. Plato declared that those countries are happy where either philosophers are made kings or kings turn philosophers. Erasmus's comment on this philosophical dream is, 'Alas! this is so far from being true, that if we consult all historians for an account of past ages, we shall find no princes more weak nor any people more slavish and wretched, than were the administrations of affairs which fell on the shoulders of some learned bookish governor.'

In our own personal life we must know that there is an intellectual abstraction which is only a form of selfish absorption. The worst of it is, or perhaps in the long run the best of it is, that such selfishness ruins the very intellectual capacity itself; for it is a law of life that selfishness of all kinds takes the edge off any faculty. When it is used for self it loses its brightness and keenness. The history of all the arts is full of pathetic cases of failure through this. When a man even stops in his work to admire himself and his facility, his work suffers at once. We at least see that a man of keen intellect has his own special and peculiar temptations to face. He may be freed from narrowness of vision, and at

the same time be chained by narrowness of heart. The lowest deep to which man can fall is a callous state in which the mind itself seems to become stupid even when it is keen enough, for it seems unable even to distinguish between right and wrong. There are degrees and steps on the way to that callous state, steps all the more insidious because they are not necessarily associated with gross evil.

One of them, for example, is that of a false tolerance often assumed to be a highly intellectual state of being. There is a breadth of view which is at bottom only moral laxity. Life and history are seen as a blur, a grey haze, with the moral distinctions rubbed out. The way the temptation works is obvious. History and literature show human life governed by other customs and codes of morals and religion in other times, and even now in other countries. The thought easily arises that nothing can be of very much importance when there is such a divergence of opinion and habit. The ideal seems to be a fine broad philosophic calm which accepts everything as it is and never lets itself get excited or angry. To this mood of mind a massacre in Armenia is only a regrettable inci-

dent in history, at the worst merely a backwash in the tide. Not so thinks or speaks the man who has gone down and kissed the very foundations of life, who has the sound mind enlightened by the Spirit of Christ. 'All cats are grey in the dark,' says the proverb. There are no distinctions to the man who lives in a mental and moral twilight and is incapable of seeing distinctions. Much of our broad, cultured tolerance is merely the fruit of indifference. We have not seen life steadily or seen it whole, if we end in a helpless state of indecision in moral things.

The truth is that in the region of mind, as elsewhere, sacrifice is the law of life. The necessity of self-denial is not limited to bodily passions. it is as much needed for the highest life of the mind as for the best development of the body. In every region of man's nature there are two voices with opposing counsels presenting divers alternatives. The one demands satisfaction, the other sacrifice, but though the voices seem hopelessly discordant, there is not such an absolute contradiction between the two rival claimants as might be imagined. In practice it is found that in the very interests of culture self-denial is necessary. Life of all kinds is only reached by

a strait gate and a narrow way. 'Thought, true labour of any kind, highest virtue itself, is it not the daughter of pain?' asks Carlyle. Sacrifice is always the method of salvation. This is not to say that through restraint of mind some ultimate spiritual good will result, but that only through it can intellectual good result. The benefit first of all is reaped in its own sphere. The athlete must practise restraint of body to attain the highest training of body. He must deny himself many sorts of indulgence, must regulate carefully his food and exercise and sleep, must practise self-control, temperance in all things, abstinence in some. It is physical control for the sake of physical training. This is an essential condition, and what is true here is true in the rest of life. Discipline is needed for all education, and discipline implies self-denial. The result of this discipline is to put a keener edge on the instrument. An undisciplined mind is wayward and fitful, easily lured by fancies and conceits, running off at a tangent, the sport of idle curiosity and prurient desire. Mental self-control is as necessary as physical. The mind must not be left to itself *for its own sake.* It needs to be brought into some sort of submission, or

it will run to waste, even if it does not run to evil.

Further, it must not be left to itself for the sake of the higher life, for the sake of the whole man. We must often choose between the different powers and instincts we possess: to select means to reject and to repress. The practical principle of choice is a simple one. In cases of casuistry we must choose the higher. A man is known by the way he chooses in possible alternatives. If to a man life is meat, he will always follow the material. If to another, mind be the measure of life, he can be coldly intellectual when his heart should burn with the passion of pity, but at least he is saved from utter bondage to the body. It is to him no sacrifice except in name to give up some lower pleasure for the sake of a loved intellectual pursuit. Something in any case has to be given up for it. When we speak of sacrifice we forget that sacrifice of some kind or other there must always be. Everything in the world has its price. To gain the lower completely we must give up the higher; to gain the higher we must give up the lower. If we sow to the flesh, it is only of the flesh we can reap. Therefore to

speak of restraint of the mind, of sacrificing mental powers and opportunities, is not to recommend an unnatural and unheard-of thing. It is, indeed, along the line of all law. It is sacrificed for the sake of something we hold dearer. If a man has seen the vision of the spiritual, in giving up the lower he is only grasping his true life. There are times when a man may have to renounce thought as a guide because human life may still be cursed by the hell of a 'reprobate mind.' There are things a man must believe, with or without reason, if need be against reason; because there are things a man must believe to remain a man. Intellect by itself will not save life from failure. There is a touch of terrible truth in Robert Burns's despairing line about 'a light from heaven that leads astray.' We speak glibly of the certainties of knowledge and the absoluteness of truth. It is not so easy to state the certainties. Again and again in history has it been seen that God hath made foolish the wisdom of this world. What instances there are of the great revelations being hid from the wise and prudent and revealed unto babes, because proud, loveless learning only hardens the heart. After all, life is not judged

by mind; mind is judged by life. Mental culture must be kept in its place in the great scheme of general culture which seeks to save the whole man, character and heart and spirit, as well as mind and body.

Remembering the high place we have accorded to intellect in life and religion, it will not be imagined that any depreciation of it can be meant now, or that we are taking away with one hand what was given by the other. Yet it must be said with emphasis, that there is a true sense in which a man may be called on to make sacrifice of certain intellectual qualities to be a complete man in the fullest meaning of the word. It was this that Romanes found hardest of all in passing over from Agnosticism to the Christian faith. He tells how his habitual scepticism kept him for a quarter of a century from ever performing the simplest act of religion, that of prayer; how he had been so long accustomed to constitute his reason as the sole judge of truth that even when his reason told him that his heart and his will should join with reason in seeking God, he was too jealous of his reason to exercise his will in the direction of his most heartfelt desires. He admitted that there were higher aspirations

of his nature than the intellectual, admitted that since these aspirations were there he ought to cultivate them also, yet all these years he could not bring himself to make a venture in the direction of faith. According to his better judgment he even felt this to be irrational, and to justify himself he was in the habit of making what he felt to be only excuses; and he candidly confessed that, whatever were other men's temptations and difficulties, his was an undue regard to reason as against heart and will.

What we need in this, as in all other regions of our nature, is to realise the sacredness of life, and so to have a deep sense of responsibility and duty. We will be saved from the vanity of some intellectual pursuits by feeling the true religious sacredness of mind. We must cover this region of our nature with religious sanctions. We need sanctification of mind as much as of any other part of our being; perhaps more, for it is with us as with Milton's Satan —

> The mind is its own place, and in itself
> Can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven.

It is only when God is the pivot of our life that we are safe, and intellect can take its right place

and play its harmonious part in the full scheme. If we would have our life raised, we must submit mind, as well as heart and conscience and will, to the process of sanctification.

We are not without our ideal here as in the rest of life. Christ is the Christian ideal. To have the same mind in us which was in Him is distinctly set before us as our aim. How full His mind was of beauty and truth, full of sweet thoughts and noble ideas, because full of love. It was the perfection of culture; yet with the Cross in it all through, with constant restraint of intellectual ambition, constant giving up of all worldly and selfish desires, constant thought of God and constant thoughtfulness of man. If we had the same mind, could think the same sort of thoughts, judge life by the same standards, accustom ourselves to the same great ideas, pettiness would pass from us and evil would die as in His presence. A mind so held in thrall could not go far astray. We want consecrated intellect as well as emotion. There is ample room for it in Christian work, for inventiveness and enterprise in methods, for the wise furtherance of great causes. There are thousands waiting to be led to great enterprises by the man of original,

consecrated mind — who never arrives. There is room also for satisfied intellectual research in Christian truth, where are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

INSTRUMENTS OF MENTAL CULTURE

'Crafty men contemn studies, simple men admire them, and wise men use them; for they teach not their own use; but that is a wisdom without them and above them, won by observation. Read not to contradict and confute, nor to believe and take for granted, nor to find talk and discourse, but to weigh and consider.' — BACON.

CHAPTER IV

INSTRUMENTS OF MENTAL CULTURE

THE approved methods of attaining mental culture seem almost commonplace, but the great things in life are very simple and within the reach of all. The differences among men in this department depend on the use made of the common instruments that lie ready to our hand. Matthew Arnold gives these three methods, and in this order: reading, observing, thinking. The order may be accepted, not as one of merit, but only because the purpose, of reading and observing is to lead up to, and to give material for, thinking. Reading means taking advantage of the observations and thoughts and opinions of others which are so bountifully stored up for us in books. Observing would comprise all that comes to us from our own experience through the various avenues of approach. It will include knowledge of men and the world, love of the beautiful in nature and in art, and even

science in its practical aspects. It will include conversation, which is after all one of the chief methods of education.

Perhaps *observation* should come first among the methods of culture, because it is earlier than the more artificial method of reading. We often forget that a child learns more in the first five years of its life than in any similar period afterwards. It has to learn a language, and all the common facts of the world, the properties of things, even the qualities of matter. The soul makes its first discovery of the world through the senses. There is no school so efficient and so equipped as the school of nature, and the blunder most of us make is that we do not take the hint from the educational process that goes on unceasingly during the first years of a child's life. We interrupt its course instead of directing it and developing it. There is much meaning for man in the old classical fable of Antæus, the giant who was a son of Earth and challenged all to wrestle with him. No one could throw him, because every time he touched his mother earth he received new strength. Hercules discovered the secret of his strength and overcame him by lifting him up from the earth and crushing him

in the air. Man, so long as he keeps his feet on fact, so long as he keeps in contact with nature and is open to the influences of the world around him, gets ever new accessions of strength and knowledge. The best education grows from the broadening intelligence that comes through eye and ear and the simple experiences of life. The man who forms the habit of observation in its widest sense lives in a world that grows wider and richer, and finds in it an inexhaustible source not only of increasing knowledge but also of fresh wonder and delight. The profoundest wisdom is always that which is being constantly verified by contact with nature and with life. The attitude of the best culture is that of the alert observer intensely interested in events and experiences. The man who goes through life knowing nothing of nature and little of the world around him may be very learned in books, but can never be completely educated.

Our whole system of education suffers from our neglect to take the broad hint that nature gives us. We think of education as the same thing as instruction, and forget that instruction is only one of the methods of education, and not the most important at that. 'Most parents,

of whatever rank or condition, fancy they have done all they need do for the education of their children when they have had them taught such things as custom requires that persons of their class should learn; although with a view to the formation of character, the main end and object of education, it would be almost as reasonable to read a treatise on botany to a flower-bed, under the notion of making the plants grow and blossom.'[1] One of the ways to obviate this mistake of our common education, is to cultivate the faculty of observation. It has value in every region of life. Artists differ not so much in their technical skill and mechanical capacity, as in the truth and freshness of observation. A trained eye notes colour and form, and selects in mental vision a composition of beauty. Of course, in speaking of observation as an instrument of culture, we do not mean the eye and the other senses, but the faculties which use the senses. It is really a disciplined mind making use of the various means of impulse and information.

It is very rare to find the perceptive powers highly cultivated, though we should imagine them the most natural. Ruskin's judgment

[1] *Guesses at Truth.*

was that a hundred men can talk for one who can think, but a thousand men can think for one who can see. Our system of education is largely to blame, since it is usually a purely literary education, the teaching of words rather than of things. The city life, which is the environment of so many children, makes it difficult for them to train observation, and in many ways civilisation has dulled the powers of man. Hardly one of us could tell the time with anything like accuracy if we were deprived of clocks and watches. The actual observation of a fact is of far more educational value than the knowledge of the same fact from a book. The latter adds a useful bit of information, the former trains a faculty which is a permanent possession. It is difficult to understand our carelessness as to this instrument of education, which is really at the basis of all possible culture. We lose much happiness and interest as well as much real training. The world becomes more wonderful as man learns more about it, and Nature opens up ever new vistas of beauty and mystery. Intellectual curiosity grows by what it feeds on. Within a given time in new surroundings, one man will notice practically nothing, another will

notice many new facts and make many deductions from them. To the untrained eye and ear, a hedge or ditch means nothing but the names. I once met an artisan in a country walk who knew every plant and insect, all the flora and fauna of that countryside, and all he had for his favourite pursuit was the half day a week which other working men spent in loafing about the streets. As he pointed out to me interesting things which I had carelessly passed by as weeds, I blushed for my ignorance and blindness. The natural sciences are specially useful in training men in this direction. The foundation of all science lies in trusting and training the senses.

Observation, of course, must include classification of the facts to be of practical use. We need to have the mass brought into order and system. The observant eye is that which fastens on the link between facts, which separates one from another and classifies others together. The keener eye trained to observe closely dismisses the superficial likenesses that deceive others, and gets at the points of fundamental resemblance. Without this the world is a bewildering mass of unrelated things,

which patient observation brings into order and beauty.

We need to distinguish between the mere acquisition of facts or accumulation of knowledge and the development of the faculties. The evolution of a faculty is of more importance than the mere gaining of information. It is the difference between perfecting an organism and filling up a receptacle. It is not necessarily developing the mind to be shovelling into it other people's thoughts. If these thoughts are not assimilated, the result can only be mental indigestion. The picking up of crumbs of knowledge is not in itself education. When we *observe*, we should ask ourselves if we also *consider*. The facts are the material for thought. They are needed for comparison, from which the mind classifies, notes differences and resemblances, arranging knowledge in order and system.

But above that is the discovery of causality, the explanation of facts by law. The human mind will never believe that anything can take place without a reason for it. In spite of false starts and mistakes due to accepting mere sequence for cause, and the errors of hasty

generalisation, and the fallacies of prejudice and the like, we cannot be content till we see meaning and reason and cause for what we observe and consider. Here we recognise the need of trained intellect, the cultivation of habits of true reasoning, by which processes of thought are brought to careful scrutiny that sophistries may be detected. For purposes of training, mathematics and logic are valuable, as mental gymnastics, if nothing else. Logic, of course, has a danger of trusting too much to the mere steps of formal reasoning, without examining the contents of thought. A man is tempted to trust too much to his method, and look more to the verbal accuracy of his argument than to its truth. It is related of Jowett, the late Master of Balliol, that when asked whether logic was an art or a science, he replied that it was neither an art nor a science, but a dodge. The anecdote probably refers to this danger we have mentioned, through forgetting that logic is only a method of disposing of thought, and has itself no real contents. Still, many a fallacy would have been killed at its birth, if it had been brought to the test of logic and examined carefully. A study of philosophy also would be a

corrective of many a crude position assumed by science. It would save science from any superficial dogmatism, and would reveal what are the real fundamental problems of existence. But no mere study of logic and philosophy and science will give the maturity of mind which we call wisdom. It needs personal reflection and experience acting on a reflective mind.

In this connection the importance of *memory* may be mentioned, as storing up for us impressions and observations enabling us to profit by previous knowledge. Methods of study differ according to temperament, and it is foolish to speak as if there were one sacred way of availing ourselves of the material at our disposal. Some men remember only when they have written down what they want to imprint on the mind. Others from their own experience are inclined to question whether the benefits of this laborious method are worth the waste of time, and agree with Dr. Johnson that what is twice read is commonly better remembered than what is transcribed, and that the true art of memory is the art of attention. This applies to observation perhaps more than to reading. Certainly, a thing fixed on the mind is of more value than

the same thing copied into a commonplace-book, even if it is easily available for use; for we never know what living seed of thought the piece of knowledge may contain and may all the time be fructifying in the mind. Memory is a faculty which must be cultivated in some fashion, unless life is to be to us only a series of impressions disconnected from the thinking and experiencing self. It is memory that makes observation of any permanent use. It has always material for thought ready to hand, recalling instances, resemblances, comparisons, contrasts. Through memory the past is made a conscious influence in the life of the present. We are not the men we might have been either in knowledge or character, because we have brought so little from the past. Growth in knowledge depends on memory. A mind with a scientific bent and even with excellent capacity for thought can achieve little if it can never trust previous impressions and observations. It will be like the hopeless labour of Sisyphus, ever rolling uphill a mighty stone which never fails to roll down again.

The memory can be cultivated in the best sense by paying heed to the events and experi-

ences of each day. This is to be done by selection, by letting the really important things leave their mark on us and by letting the unimportant slip. There is a true sense in which the art of remembering is the art of forgetting. A good memory does not mean the retentive one that never forgets and lays hold of everything indiscriminately, but the memory that selects the right things to keep fast. The memory that hangs on to all kinds of unrelated knowledge turns the mind into a scrap-heap with much in it that is trivial and much that is only rubbish. Nothing is more tiresome than a relation of all sorts of unimportant details led off into endless side issues and miscellaneous recollections. The real secret of memory is vivid impression. We forget the things that are vague and indefinite, while the things we care intensely about make their indelible mark on us. So the keener and richer our minds become, the more easily do we remember what feeds them and interests them.

A great help is to unify the different items of knowledge, fitting them into each other and placing them in their natural connection. This is essential, as the mere gathering of informa-

tion and acquiring of facts, to be stowed away in the pigeon-holes of memory, may weaken the mind instead of strengthening it. Pure memory-work may to a large extent be wasted labour from this point of view. Getting lists of dates by heart will not necessarily improve the faculties. Any system for aiding weak memories which depends on artificial association, is on wrong lines; for though it may help one to remember facts, it does nothing to train the mind. Only things which have a real relation to each other should be associated together in memory. There can be no mental discipline in connecting an important fact with a trivial and accidental one. Hammerton recalls a book upon memory which was very popular in its day in which this artificial method of association is advocated. Men who forgot their umbrellas were told that they ought always to associate the image of an umbrella with that of an open door, so that they could never leave any house without thinking of one. 'But would it not be preferable to lose two or three guineas annually rather than see a spectral umbrella in every doorway?'

Observation, as an instrument of mental

culture, must be defined widely enough to include social intercourse, conversation, and the direct contact with other minds. Many a living impulse is received from the impact of a fresh intellect. Society as well as solitude is needed to produce true culture. Every student owes much to comradeship in kindred studies, as every worker owes much of his skill to comradeship in work. There have been young men's societies which have been a great element in the formation of character and in the production of intellectual taste, where mind sharpened mind as iron sharpens iron, where noble ambitions were nursed and encouraged. So much of our social intercourse is trivial, that men do not often dive into each others' minds and bring up treasures from the depth; yet there have been times of great culture when conversation was practically the only method available. The dialogues of Plato suggest to us what was possible in Greek life, and even yet the great value of oral teaching lies in the contact of mind with mind. The solitary thinker loses much of impulse and correction and gets out of touch with life. We might all make more of this important instrument of education. There

is no one from whom we might not learn something, and many a man grows rich in mind through his healthy interest in life and keen curiosity, who has very little trafficking with books. In his essay on the education of children, Montaigne recommends that a boy should be trained to learn from conversation. 'Let him be advised, being in company, to have his eye and ear in every corner of the room, for I find that the places of greatest honour are commonly possessed by men that have least in them, and that the greatest fortunes are not always accompanied by the ablest parts. Let him examine every man's talent — a peasant, a bricklayer, or a passenger. A man may learn something from every one of these in their several capacities, and something will be picked out of their discourse whereof some use may be made at one time or another; nay, even the folly and impertinence of others will contribute to his instruction. By observing the graces and fashions of all he sees he will create to himself an emulation of the good and a contempt of the bad.'

The next great instrument of mental culture is books and reading. A man who is ignorant of

what others before him have thought will turn down many a blind alley, will set great store on ideas that have been proved false, and will probably overrate his own intellectual accomplishments. We would never travel very far if we had always to go back to the beginning and call everything to question and start at first principles. Books are the record of other people's experience and thought and feeling, and as such are of immense importance, widening our vision, extending our limited range of life, correcting our own conclusions, and giving vast data for our thinking. But after all, we must remember that what they contain is only the material in the rough which we ourselves must use for our culture. They are a valuable instrument, and are often the first real impulse many men get for the intellectual life. Most of us would be poorly equipped mentally if all we had gained from books were taken away from us. At the same time, the great education is life, not literature. The quality of our mind and character is formed by our vital experience, the fruit of our own thought and feeling and action. Knowledge can be added to us indefinitely from the record of what others have learned, but wisdom must

issue from the living source within ourselves. Even the value of what others can give us is determined by our capacity to make it our own, and to profit by their observation and thinking. Erudition does not mean a cultivated mind. The mere scholar may have never learned wisdom, and all his learning may only be the echo of others' words. Indeed it is astonishing how intellectual workers will go on repeating the fallacies of their predecessors, through their blind dependence on what is stated in books. Generation after generation of commentators will repeat ancient and traditional interpretations, because they rarely trust their own independent vision and judgment. Some of the greatest thinkers and writers were not bookmen in our sense of the word. The bookmen are those who write prolix commentaries on their work.

There is a tendency to overestimate the value of books in any scheme of culture. The mere knowledge of authors is supposed to guarantee education. Yet we know from sad experience that a man can be bookish, and even learned, a very dungeon of scholarship, and be narrow in his judgments and cramped in his mind.

Shakespeare satirises pedantic book-learning and the exaggerated value of books in the scene in *Love's Labour's Lost* where Sir Nathaniel the curate and Holofernes the schoolmaster bandy long words and Latin quotations with poor old policeman Dull. The curate apologises to the schoolmaster for the policeman's ignorance, 'Sir, he hath never fed of the dainties that are bred in a book: he hath not eaten paper, as it were; he hath not drunk ink; his intellect is not replenished, he is only an animal, only sensible in the duller parts.' Our view of culture has been too scholastic, too much a literary acquirement. We see that in many other ways — in practical life, in dealing with affairs, in observational science, in love of nature — genuine elements of culture can be attained. Literature is a great gift to man, and all the inventions which make it common property are among the triumphs of the race. Yet a protest is needed against indiscriminate valuation of it. Like many gifts, it carries a menace in its bosom.

It is easy to speak in praise of books, and to tell of the pleasure and profit reading can bring to a man, but perhaps there is nothing in our lives to-day which requires more careful regula-

tion — and which gets less. Even printing is not an unmixed blessing. Information was never more universally extended, but information is not education. Everybody can read, but the proportion of thought and wisdom to folly has not increased in its due ratio. We seem to think we are doing well if we are reading a book — *any* book. Much of our reading is from idleness and mere vacuity. Or we read in the vain idea that we are thus entering into the life of thought, when as a matter of fact reading is made a substitute for thinking. Books must always take an important place in culture, but they are only one instrument of culture. Nay, reading is only a means to a means, for the chief instrument of culture is thought, and books have their place as an inducement to thought. Literature is not an end in itself, but a means to develop sound judgment and taste and intelligence. Of course there is a place for recreation, a mere enjoyment in reading, but it is not with that we are specially concerned in our present connection. Books have a ministry of comfort, and a ministry of innocent happiness, and one might speak long of the delights of reading, and the resource it affords to a man in almost any situation. Our

present purpose, however, is to deal with reading as it ministers to intellectual culture. It was never so important and perhaps so difficult to know what to read, just because more than ever of the making many books there is no end.

We must soon settle for ourselves what *not* to read, or we may as well give up reading altogether. The principle of selection means a principle of rejection. We must be willing to know nothing of the book of the month, or of the day, or of the moment. We have to give up the attempt to keep up with the outflow of books even along one line. There is no reason in the world why we need read the reams of minor poetry if we have not lived with the great poets who have fed the life of man. If reading is to be to us, as it may be, a means of culture, we must have a rigorous standard. We must avoid what De Quincey called the gluttony of books. It is a very good plan to give most of our spare time for reading to the great standard accredited books. These have achieved their position through merit. Time has sifted her treasures for us, and that not by haphazard. Why waste time over the ephemeral prints, the endless magazine articles, if we are ignorant of the

world's best works? If we have serious views of the place of literature in culture, we must do more than read these books once and have done with them, as we read a newspaper leader or most modern novels. We must live with them and let them influence the very fibre of our minds, giving us elevated thoughts and calm standards of judgment. After all, in spite of the endless making of books, we can make some headway with those which by common consent are put on the first rank. It is not altogether a counsel of perfection to set before ourselves the mastery of the world's best.

Culture is not so much concerned with *belles lettres*, or æsthetic style, or the curiosities of literature, as with the great formative books of universal and permanent value. And it is not the number of these we master which is most important, but the closeness of our intercourse. A man has received more true culture from the constant and patient study of one book than is got by the ordinary desultory reader who samples whole libraries. The influence of the Bible on the life and thought of men need only be mentioned to prove this. Not that we should subscribe to the narrow doctrine of some that

no other book is needed. That is not piety, though it looks like it. Still, it would be well if we enforced anew on ourselves the value of the Bible as literature. Apart altogether from what the modern world owes to the Bible, morally and religiously, our debt to it as literature is immense. Almost every great writer has acknowledged his own individual indebtedness.

More important than the question what to read is the question how to read. A true method of reading will solve the problem of the kind of reading. If we read with attention and system, and with desire to understand and profit, we will naturally discard the trivial and empty books, and will reserve ourselves for those that are worthy of our steel. The fruits of culture in wisdom, good taste, critical appreciation, are not gathered by chance. They are not a gift, but a growth. The attention which a serious book requires is a power that comes from cultivation. Emerson speaks of creative reading in which the mind is braced by labour and invention, so that the page we read becomes illuminated with manifold allusion. The suggestiveness of a book depends very much on how we come to it, and the impression it makes is often a test

of ourselves more than a test of the book. If we read with care and sympathy, taking pains to understand and appreciate, we will soon find out the books which nourish our mind, and will agree with Macaulay when he said that he would rather live in a garret with a library than in a palace without one.

We have said that for the purposes of culture all the means referred to have their place as giving food for thought. The object of all education is to form the mind, not merely to furnish it with information, even the best that books can give. Information is useful and necessary to give data for making judgments and arriving at decisions, but it is thought which is the instrument of mental culture. John Foster, in a letter to a correspondent, remarked that in the review of life we shall see that perhaps the worst fault was that we had thought far too little. All who have tried in any way to impress their fellows with any truth have felt that this was the one needful thing, to get them to think, to take account of the facts and open their minds to great issues.

It is so easy to refuse to consider facts till

the facts hit us in the face, when it is usually too late for any practical purpose. We seem to have a constitutional disinclination to consider matters of grave moment; and to many of us the last thing we would do is to stop in our breathless life and give ourselves space to think. We seldom think anything out right to its end. We even take up our opinions ready made, giving little personal investigation to a subject, with no serious regard for the facts on which a decision should be built, and with no deliberate thought on the great issues that hang on a decision. Among all the types of character in our midst — many of them excellent and some of them beautiful — the thoughtful type is perhaps the rarest. The reason, of course, is that thoughtfulness implies the collectedness of mind which can only come from a long discipline. Complacent drifting with the tide is common in every region. In politics we find everywhere the unintelligent acceptance of a party creed, where men repeat the old catch-words of party, and do not really set themselves to master the problems they are called on to decide. In business, even when skill and energy and industry are lavished on work, there is often a lack of initiative which

comes from a complete grasp of the situation. In religion, how common it is to find the traditional and the conventional, and how seldom the original. By original is not meant the senseless striving after new opinions, but a living faith that is the expression of a man's own thought and experience. We do not often hear a live voice that is more than an echo, speaking out of the depths of personal and experimental knowledge.

We have seen that books, which are a record of what other men have thought and felt, and should be a valuable provocative of thought, are commonly used by us as a substitute for thinking, or as a sedative to the mind, if not even a soporific. Our practical activities and methods of work and busy ways may be tending in the same direction of stifling thought. It is far easier to be busy than to be thoughtful. Activity may be not the fruit of thought, but a substitute for it. It is indeed one of the commonest expedients to drown serious thought in a flood of activity. A man can forget the keenest impressions and can forget grief by throwing himself into all sorts of affairs. There are more ways of finding distraction than by the common

way of worldly pleasure. Business may be a distraction to a man, by which he gets rid of the clamant call to consider, to give calm and serious reflection to the greatest questions in the world. We may be so engrossed in living that we can neglect life. With the countless distractions of our modern life, with the many ways of evading thought — by reading, by business, by pleasure, and the like — we may well take the counsel to heart, to gather ourselves at the centre and consider and think on our ways. 'A thinking man is the worst enemy the Prince of Darkness can have,' says Carlyle; and that is true, for thoughtlessness, carelessness, intellectual and moral indifference are the great stumbling-blocks in the way of the progress of true religion.

Culture has suffered in reputation by its aloofness from life, as if the mere existence of taste and judgment and thoughtfulness were a complete end in itself. True thinking needs to be directed in some form or other to practical issues, and culture needs to be related to life. It justifies itself by its invaluable contribution to the world. What we need most is not speculation nor vague pondering over a general problem, nor the logical sequence of thought.

A man may have many intellectual interests, and may exercise his brain in very strenuous fashion and be absorbed in profound speculations, may love to crack the hardest nuts in theology or philosophy or scientific investigation, and yet may come short of the highest demands made upon him by true culture. Indeed, science and theology and philosophy and the intellectual life generally, may be made a distraction to escape the further appeal of thought. It is much to be seriously inclined, to be open to consider difficult subjects, to have trained the mind in veracity and accuracy and fed it with noble ideas, to have thought broadly and largely on the vast problems of the world. That mental discipline gives the serious bent and the wide outlook, and at least saves a man from shallowness and incoherence of thought and light-headed flightiness. It also saves from the frivolity of mind and emptiness of life which enable some to float gaily on the surface, or which in others lead to satisfaction in corrupt and evil pleasures, contentment with the life of sense. But some have reached splendid views of life at large, who have never translated it into terms of their own life nor come to close quarters

with themselves. We need to see life in the light of duty and personal responsibility and privilege, and find one of our highest motives for self-culture in the equipment of self for high service.

The methods we have dealt with of attaining culture may be summed up in a quotation from Ruskin, which states in general language what we must each work out for ourselves. 'Intellectual education,' he says in *Fors Clavigera*, 'consists in giving the creature the faculties of admiration, hope, and love. These are to be taught by the study of beautiful nature; and the sight and history of noble persons; and the setting forth of noble objects of action.' These correspond pretty accurately to our three divisions, observing, reading, thinking. The test of the value of our culture we can apply to ourselves: whether it has really inspired us with admiration and love for all that is good and beautiful and true, and how it works out in the service of our lives.

CULTURE AND SPECIALISM

'We are not born to solve the problems of the world, but to find out where the problem begins, and then to keep within the limits of what we can grasp.'—GOETHE.

CHAPTER V

CULTURE AND SPECIALISM

THE possibilities of life are not exhausted by the careful cultivation of one special faculty. We are always beset by the temptation to lay the stress on a particular side of our nature, at the expense of all other capacities. In the intellectual life we are usually developed along one line, and are inclined to underestimate the other branches of study and knowledge. The scientist glorifies his subject and his methods, sometimes without a glimmer of a notion of the vast region of thought of which the philosopher takes charge. The philosopher deals with his systems in a kind of vacuum, with little tolerance for the wisdom of the man of affairs. The business man sometimes has a delightful oblivion of both science and philosophy, and cultivates his calculating and practical thinking powers. While all of them may be ignorant that there is a world of art, or poetry, or religion existing

for others. It is dreadfully easy to grow narrow and cramped even by those who do live a real intellectual life. We are forced to be specialists by the necessities of our work, and the danger is imminent to all of neglecting the larger, richer life, which is our birthright as the heirs of time. In religion also the same danger arises of defining the saintly character in terms of one special quality. The mediæval church looked for the ascetic note in its saints, abstraction from the world and the virtues of the recluse. We can go as far in the other extreme, and ask for nothing but fussy practicality and a blatant zeal. If we try to imagine the finest type of character to which we would gladly give the name of saintliness, we find ourselves giving the pre-eminence to one of the graces. We usually think of one special quality, and not of a full-orbed personality defective on no side of true human nature. The fact is, that in all these regions of life we need to be reminded of the many-sided perfection which ought at least to be our ideal.

In most things our measure of excellence is liable to be influenced by what we think our own strong point. Selden in his shrewd lawyer's *Table Talk* exemplified this by a tale of Nash

the poet, poor enough (as poets used to be), seeing an alderman with his gold chain, upon his great horse, and said by way of scorn to one of his companions, 'Do you see yon fellow, how goodly, how big he looks? Why, that fellow cannot make a blank verse!' If capacity to make even indifferent blank verse were to be the test of aldermen or of any other posts of authority, there would be some startling changes in the world. All of us in our judgments — even poets — need to take a wider view than that of our special calling. We would say that for complete health and perfect physical condition the growth should be all-round in every power and part. And similarly, we would say that the complete man must not be narrow in his sympathies or his interests. The chief purpose of all education should be to produce a well balanced, fully developed mind. It is the purpose of the great education of life to bring every power to its best, to draw out the highest faculties, and yet leave no part entirely uncared for. This is the meaning of the much abused phrase, general culture. It lives as a constant protest against one-sidedness. In these days of specialising, when in everything men are

forced to limit themselves, to do almost exclusively the one thing they can do best or have learned to do, the protest is particularly needed. In all sorts of work this tendency is going on, and increasingly so. It may not be possible to alter the conditions of life to-day, and perhaps we should not want to change them, but it is foolish to shut our eyes to the dangers and drawbacks of present conditions.

Of course we need to remember that there are dangers on both sides. There are ever a Scylla and Charybdis to be passed in the voyage of life. The chief intellectual temptation of culture is the danger of being superficial. This arises from the very nature of the case, as culture implies breadth of interest. We are inclined to make it too much a matter of accomplishments. The very variety of pursuits produces the danger. The man whose ideal is mental culture is always liable to degenerate into the mere *dilettante*. Culture is a useful corrective of undue development of one part at the expense of the rest, for it aims at symmetry of life. A tree to grow into its fulness must have light all round it. If it is too near a house, it will grow out on one

side dwarfed or distorted. The mind needs open space and light all round it to grow in fulness, and culture at least attempts to give it that. A largeness of interest in many things counteracts the narrowness of our necessary specialism in all branches of activity.

But culture in the repulsion from the one ditch runs the risk of falling into the ditch on the other side. A man in the name of culture can live with vacuous general interests, with no special life-work, with nothing he has made his own. To such is due the contempt into which the very name has fallen. It has come to mean the quality of the *dilettante*, a smattering of everything and a mastery of nothing, often another name also for affectation. Even when the effort after culture is serious and sincere, there are pitfalls that lie near the life of study. One is the overfastidious taste which keeps a man from ever making any real use of his acquirements, and which will not let him produce anything, making him spend his life in dreams. Another is the danger of being smothered in a mass of detail, letting the acquisition of knowledge grow faster than any power of using it. To trifle with this and

that, touching now on one subject and now on another, never concentrating the mind on the mastery of a single subject, is to spread out into shallows what might have gone to depth. It is often due to weakness of character, lack of perseverance and of will, and of serious application. There is a many-sided cultivation which is easier attained and more commonly possessed than the force of character needed to perfect one branch.

This is often the value of a definite profession or business. In the devoted application to a profession a young man's intellectual energy is often for the first time in his life concentrated. His school education embraced so many subjects, among which he could only dabble, that his powers of mind were scattered, while his professional training gives him at least a command of one line which strengthens his character, and reveals to him the value of persistent labour. The foes of culture are of its own household, and pedantry is one of the chief of these, due to ignorance of life and an exalted conception of mere scholastic acquirements. It usually also develops into a petty conceit, which makes mind the measure of man, and a know-

ledge of books the measure of mind. It creates a new barrier between men, as exclusive and contemptuous as any other class or caste distinction. We are called to avoid the two extremes, learned pedantry on the one side, and ignorant contempt of learning on the other. Both are foolish, but the former is the more culpable of the two, since it is in the name of a pretended enlightenment, though it really has its origin in superficial and vague knowledge. Something is to be said for the advantages of specialism even in education.

The young man who is allowed to follow the lines of work for which he is most fitted is more likely to succeed than when he is set to a variety of things that may not be congenial to his natural aptitude. And a smattering of accomplishments, which too often passes for education, gives no real training, and often also produces a very offensive type such as Mark Pattison in his *Memoirs* protests against in the young Oxford which the present system tends to turn out. 'From showy lectures, from manuals, from attractive periodicals, the youth is put in possession of ready-made opinions on every conceivable subject, a crude mass of matter which

he is taught to regard as real knowledge. Swollen with this puffy and unwholesome diet he goes forth into the world, regarding himself like the infant in the nursery as the centre of all things, the measure of the universe. He thinks he can evince his superiority by freely distributing sneers and scoffs upon all that does not agree with the set of opinions which he happens to have adopted from imitation, from fashion, or from chance. Having no root in itself, such a type of character is liable to become an easy prey to any popular charlatanism or current fanaticism.'

The value of a special life-work is that it presents a subject that a man is called upon to master. The bread and butter sciences, those by which men earn their living, do not deserve the sneers so commonly passed upon them, as if they had no place in what is called a liberal education. Devotion to one's special work brings a strength to both mind and character which cannot be otherwise obtained. It is always a good thing for a young man to peg out a field for himself, which he sets himself to master, even though it be a narrow field. The serious man feels that he must limit himself

to make the most of himself. There is a perennial source of strength in the simplicity of a definite purpose. The first secret of all art and life is to learn the limitations of both and to obey them. The really great man in science or literature or art is the man who first of all has mastered his own branch of work and refuses to be tempted away to other attractive regions. A definite aim persistently pursued gives both strength and dignity to a life. More than ever men feel that they cannot dissipate their energies. Specialisation has come to stay, for it cannot be avoided if knowledge is to be at all thorough. Sound and complete mastery of a subject implies a deliberate disregard of other branches of knowledge. Of course this means that we are menaced by the danger of becoming one-sided in our faculties, and even narrow in our sympathy. We need to remember that education is designed to make men of us, and not merely to make us capable business or professional men. It is here that culture tells, in presenting its ideal that the end of life is to be, and not merely to get or succeed.

It is found in every industry that it pays better for workers to confine themselves to

doing one thing. A man who some years ago would have been a general blacksmith engaged in all the branches of that trade, will now perhaps do nothing but shoe horses or hammer nails. Division of labour, or specialising of function, have become essential in modern industry. It is even a tendency of our civilisation to divide men into classes, and especially the two great classes of those whose work is almost exclusively manual and those whose work is intellectual. The drawbacks are obvious, seen in our factory system with its monotony of occupation, its suppression of the individual, who becomes a minute fraction of the whole. Much of the work is dwarfing, as for example that of the man who does one small operation in the process of sharpening a pin, or that of the girl who sticks labels on boxes all the day and every day. In hardly any modern industry does one man begin and finish an article, and thus much of the old artisan's pride in turning out a complete and workmanlike job is lost. There may be some satisfaction in the increased facility acquired, the ease with which a movement is repeated, but all must admit that the system is narrowing to the man as compared with the

older ways. Here it may be said with emphasis that if these conditions are necessary and permanent, as they seem to be, then there is all the more reason why the rest of life should be spent amid broader interests. Many men feel that their daily work does not call out the best that is in them. It is so constant and invariable that it has become purely mechanical. They are not asked to think, and all that they need do at the best in earning their daily bread is to use one little lobe of their brain. The great condemnation of much of our industrial life is its deadly monotony. But even so, without touching commercial conditions, there is at least a partial escape open to every man. The larger intellectual life in one or other of its forms offers a refuge and an antidote.

The tendency to which we have referred is not confined to our industrial conditions, but is true of all conditions. It is seen in the sphere of learning, in the professions, and literature and art and science. No lawyer pretends to a complete knowledge of law. Law has grown complex with all the complexity of society, and we find a man specialising in railway law, in commercial law, and the like. In medicine the same tendency is

seen. The general practitioner, who was physician and surgeon, and dentist and oculist, gives place to men who have made themselves distinguished in one department, specialists on eye or ear; or even a surgeon will practically do one sort of operation alone, acquiring a skill and deftness and unerring accuracy in his work impossible to any but a specialist. The danger here too is to forget the whole in the part, and treat a patient not as a living man, but as a combination of organs. Yet it is a great gain to medicine at large, extending the bounds of knowledge in that profession. In the same way the whole field of knowledge is partitioned out and subdivided. No longer can any single mind profess to take all knowledge for its province. The time when a man felt himself able to write a commentary on the whole Bible has passed, or is passing. A Greek scholar must be content to leave to others the mastery of Hebrew. Only on one subject or a department of a subject can a man be an authority. Only to one class of work or a branch of that can he give his life with the best results.

We may think that in some cases this limitation of work is carried too far, as with the scholar

who died regretting that he had not devoted his life to the dative case. This type of scholar is no modern appearance merely. Montaigne describes the type in his day: 'This man whom about midnight, when others take their rest, thou seest come out of his study meagre-looking, with eyes thrilling, phlegmatic, squalid and spauling, dost thou think that plodding on his books he doth seek how he shall become an honester man, or more wise or more content? There is no such matter. He will either die in his pursuit, or teach posterity the measure of Plautus' verse and the true orthography of a Latin word.' On the other hand, it has to be remembered that many promising young lives have come to nothing for want of a concentrated purpose. It is true that many a man has escaped being a great man, as some one says, by splitting into two middling ones. Great talents are often dissipated in a multiplicity of interests, when a man with a talent for concentration and perseverance will leave his mark in one sphere of activity or in one branch of a subject. Giardini, when asked how long it would take to learn to play on the fiddle, replied that it would take twelve hours a day for twenty years. All men who have been great in their own line

have had serious views of their duty towards it, and of the immense demands it makes on its followers. And it may be taken as an axiom that the man who gives up his whole time and thought to a pursuit will commonly taste some measure of success. Restriction of effort is part of the necessity of the case with all of us. To make much of life we must give our chief strength to one or two pursuits. But this subdivision, besides the danger to which we have referred of narrowness, has also the danger of taking the trees for the wood, never rising to the general from the mass of the particular.

The culture of the body is the perfection of its health, by which a man lives and works with ease, not sacrificing eye for ear or hand for foot. It means a balance of physical power, along with a development of any particular and special capacity. A man whose gift lies in delicacy of touch, by which his fingers can do the nicest mechanical operations, is in duty to the community bound to use his gift and make that his work. But in duty to himself, and ultimately also to the community, he is bound not to neglect the rest of him to get an abnormal delicacy of touch. For even the exactest fingers lose nerve

when the body loses health. To preserve the requisite balance is the task of the body. It is so with the mind also. Mental culture is the perfection of intellectual health. As manual workers have their one department, so brain workers to be truly successful must have their one sphere. Here also an unhealthy mental condition may arise from narrowness. Oliver Wendell Holmes has a character in *The Poet at the Breakfast Table* who gave up his life to the study of beetles. He was a Coleopterist, and had no scientific interest in any living things, even crawling things, but beetles. Even that sphere was too large for his minute study, and he specialised further and only claimed to be an authority on a special kind of beetle. He was a Coleopterist who was a Scarabeeist. He had a mild interest in the Lepidoptera, butterflies and moths; but life was too short for him to really know anything but beetles. The value of such quiet, painstaking work in every branch of human knowledge can hardly be overestimated. But there is no reason why the man should be dwarfed. A man can take a saner and truer and more scientific view of beetles who does not altogether give up his soul to them. Sir Joshua Reynolds

used to say that a man who is at the head of a profession is above it.

The advocates of an unmitigated specialism argue that the broadening of interests must lead to superficiality, but often what appears to be superficial is really the ample background of a rich and ripe mind. We appreciate the value of this breadth of training if we want a true judgment on a particular question; for we find a largeness of view and a dispassionateness of mind which alone come from wide knowledge. Every man also who has lived the intellectual life discovers how subjects merge into each other, how separate sciences are branches of the one science. The student whose mind is full of a subject finds help everywhere; almost every book he reads seems to have bearings on his subject, and no branch of knowledge comes amiss. It is surely possible after all to avoid the two extremes — that of a man who gives up the general for the particular, like our amusing friend the Coleopterist, and that of a man who lives with vacuous general interests and with no hold of particular knowledge. The ideal certainly is the general along with the special — knowledge of many, mastery of one.

The practical difficulty is that in some spheres the demands are so insistent that a man fears to undertake anything outside of his work. This one thing he must do to preserve the force of his special capacity. The fear is often ungrounded, as a generous culture should really aid and not hinder the technical skill. We must not forget that in a very true sense a broad culture helps even in the special spheres of activity, for it feeds and refreshes the mind.

'Mass and meat hinder no man'—that is, it is not waste of time to do what will in the end aid the capacity for working. There is great truth in the advice that we must do more things than one in order to do that one well. A genuine love of intellectual things keeps the mind fresh and open to influences other than those our own pursuits bring. By broadening the range of our knowledge we increase the measure of our sympathy and give new point to our appreciation. It corrects the narrowness of our special work and the deficiencies of character which our special work often fosters. We come back with new zest and strength to our definite tasks from every excursion into the larger world of life and thought. 'Many tastes, one hobby' is an old

and very good adage, especially if the one hobby be our life's work. The many tastes bring relief and refreshment, and send us with renewed power to our work. Life can renew itself from many springs and drink from many a brook by the way. Every noble enlargement of thought and experience should enrich our capacity even for special work.

Gounod used to say to his music pupils, 'Be wider than your calling.' He practised it himself, as can be seen in the breadth of his literary and artistic and other interests, the fine flavour of which the keen ear can note in his music. Most of our great musical composers have been men of varied culture and wide general education. Mendelssohn especially was a man of almost prodigious versatility — an Admirable Crichton in his many-sided talents and accomplishments. The more varied the intellectual resources are, and the wider the range of the mind, the more chance there is for a rich harvest in the special line, say, of music. Of course there have been exceptions where the native genius has made light of disabilities, and has perhaps brought a certain freshness and originality most welcome to a sophisticated age.

Great talent for any art can overcome a pretty big handicap in the race. At the same time, a lack of culture always hampers a man in some direction, and keeps him from the wide appeal to all classes of society, and it certainly limits his equipment. A lack of culture nearly always carries with it a lack of self-criticism; for the material for true criticism is wanting. Many a man has spent his strength attempting to do something which has been done already, or, what is worse, something which has been amply tried and has been proved false. He suffers from lack of the general education that at least would have enabled him to choose his tasks with wisdom. On the other hand, it must be admitted that a very extensive culture is inclined to give a certain pedantry, and, perhaps, a coldness of treatment to an art. That, and the danger of the conventional, are its temptations. But in the long run, a broad and generous culture in touch with the great human interests will give a man a deeper insight into his own work, and by relating his own small field to the broad acres of knowledge will enrich it indefinitely. The claim of culture for a complete healthy development of the whole man comes with great point to us. It

means the conscious training of the mind by which the best results possible for the individual are reached. We do not fail to recognise a cultured opinion on any subject, whether we quite agree with it or not. We feel it to be sane and comprehensive, not the fruit of narrowness or conceit, but the calm judgment of a trained mind. It may be true that civilisation demands from us an ever-increasing specialism of function, but, asks Schiller, 'Can it be intended that man should neglect himself for any particular design? Ought nature to deprive us, by its design, of a perfection which Reason, by its own, prescribes to us? Then it must be false that the development of single faculties makes the sacrifice of totality necessary; or, if indeed the law of Nature presses so heavily, it becomes us to restore, by a higher art, this totality in our nature which art has destroyed.'

The one great consolation for the increasing specialism of function in modern life is that it is a gain for society at large and for knowledge in general. The individual may suffer, but the larger life is enriched, and through that even the individual gains. Social progress depends on this narrowing of personal opportunity. When

a single man did everything for himself he probably had a more all-round development, but civilisation was at a standstill. There could be little general social advance without the apportioning of special spheres of work and interest. The division of labour means greater complexity of society. Herein lies the great compensation for the specialism which in some ways we are compelled to deplore. We need to take larger views than of any self-advantage or even self-culture, and look upon ourselves as part of a great organic whole, serving a useful function in the life of the world. The unit is no longer the individual, but the race. We have each a contribution to make, a place to fill, a work to perform. The selfish life is the one damning offence. If the individual withers that the race may grow, if social progress depends on our becoming more than ever a little bit of the great machine, we can turn even this necessity into a great privilege, and can bring into our lives a new breadth of view which itself means culture. Our ideal will become the consecration of intellect and of all capacity by which it is dedicated to service. This consecration will save us from pettiness and will extend our

vision. It is enough for the eye that it serves the best life of a man: it should be enough for a man that he is able to serve in some fashion the best life of the world. Childish vanity of one's own gift, or insolent contempt of the gifts of others, become impossible; for we will see how wide and varied service may be. In the richness of human life as a whole we will partake and get our share of the general gains. If we are consciously consecrating ourselves, we will grow into some largeness of nature. If we see the true nobility of service, and are humbly desirous of finding a place to serve, all petty pride in our own gifts or all fretful repining for the lack of them will pass from us. We will gladly see the place for all sorts of true work in every sphere of activity. It takes many kinds of men to make a world. We see how eye and ear and foot and hand in the social body have their place and their duties and their rights. We see the need for, and the dignity of, all true work of every kind. Commerce, industry, science, art, literature, are all contributing to the good of the whole. To have attained this point of view is itself to have attained culture, which sees the place of the part in the whole. There is room for the scholar and

the statesman, the artist and the artisan, the man of business and the poet —

> When God helps all the workers for His world,
> The singers shall have help of Him, not last.

There is no culture like this generous tolerance, and broad tender sympathy, which come from the consecrated view of life.

CULTURE OF IMAGINATION

'To see a world in a grain of sand,
And a heaven in a wild flower,
Hold infinity in the palm of your hand,
And Eternity in an hour.'

— WILLIAM BLAKE.

CHAPTER VI

CULTURE OF IMAGINATION

IMAGINATION as a faculty has suffered from both inaccuracy of language and inaccuracy of thought. In common speech it is largely used for the unreal and often for the untrue. We use it colloquially to mean baseless and fanciful things, and even erroneous thoughts. We say that a man's troubles are imaginary, as much as to say that they do not exist. It suffers also more than the ordinary fate of language, which is always in danger of being rubbed down and vulgarised and emptied of its original meaning. Our prevalent inaccuracy of thought adds another misapprehension. With our materialistic standard we judge things by their appearance, and the things which do not appear are assumed not to exist. We call material things the real, and the ideal we call an imagination, meaning that it is something unreal. But the material is

after all the fleeting and transitory, while the unsubstantial is the truly permanent. The permanent thing in everything is the unseen part of it. The sound of the word dies upon the passing wind, and the thought it carries lives. The outward form of music is momentary, and the beautiful conception remains. The canvas fades and the stone crumbles, but the vision in the soul of the artist dies not. The world of sense and sight and sound is only appearance, but the thought of it is fact. The material changes ever; but the spiritual, the aspiration, the ideal, the imagination lives in endless life.

Imagination is a necessary part of man's equipment, and is capable of culture, and therefore it is our duty to give it room and opportunity to grow. Even when we prize imagination and make it the test of the highest forms of art, we are inclined to omit the duty of its culture. We think it to be like genius, a gift which cannot be cultivated. But even genius is not a difference in kind, but in degree. It does not mean another sort of flesh and blood, another sort of head and heart. It is a finer quality of nerve and brain. Indeed it may be said to be a deeper and truer and more

profound imaginative faculty. It is true that some have more than others, but that is no reason why the less gifted should despair of the culture of what they really possess. Some men have more and better knit muscle than others, but most of us make shift to walk somehow, and on occasion to run, though not perhaps with the ease and grace of a great athlete. If we have no imagination at all, then it must be a lost art or an atrophied power, for every child has it. We see it in almost every nursery game, in their make-belief, in their pretty fancies about animals, in their charming acting of parts, in their instinct for the dramatic, in their love of fairy tales. Romance is a child's natural food. Watch a little maiden playing with her dolls, investing them with life, composing dialogues for them; or watch a boy fancying himself the engineer of a railway train, or the general of an army; or notice their complete withdrawal from the world as they live through every incident of a story; and you must admit that imagination is the earliest and the strongest faculty of childhood. It is the age of fancy and mystery and poetry. A mother reading a poem to a boy of six said, 'I am afraid you can't understand it, dear,' and

was promptly rebuked for her unbelief when he replied, 'Oh, yes, I can very well, if only you would not explain.'[1] The poem brought its own train of thought to him, its own suggestions, its own series of images. It was not her train of thought, and hers only disturbed his. We often hurt the tender feelings of a child, and help to kill the imaginative faculty by our scepticism and cynicism and impatience. It is as natural a gift as reason, and has its part to play in the making of a true life. When it is lost, and a man becomes a literalist, we appreciate what a gift it is. The literalist will solemnly argue about a joke, and ponderously explain a fancy. He swells the great army of the world's bores. We have all met the matter-of-fact man, like the one Douglas Jerrold tells of, who, if you talked to him of Jacob's ladder, would ask the number of the steps.

Imagination is one of the finest gifts of mind and can do much to make life happy. We have a wonderful power of losing self in ideal scenes, and can transform dull reality with beauty. Amid the commonplace or even the painful, we give rein to imagination and are off to fairer

[1] Sully, *Studies of Childhood*, p. 56.

realms. This power of putting ourselves in other circumstances gives us a magic touch, which is a real remedy for many an evil of our lot. Imagination also is helpful to all the other faculties. Even humour seems dependent on it; for both the pathos and the humour of life are due to the discrepancy between the real and the ideal. We see the real, and through imagination we see the ideal, and the contrast is sometimes pathetic and sometimes humorous. All poetry and all art are children of imagination. To cut off the imaginative life would be to make the world poorer to us all. Imagination is the window which lets in light to the sombre house of life. As a rule, we have not enough window-space to keep life moderately healthy. There is a light that never was on sea or land, and the man who sees it can never rest in the sordidness of the usual. He has seen enough of the vision to keep him from losing his heart to what is base. If through the passion of a great ideal or through the vision of a beautiful future he misses what the world calls success, his life is not necessarily a failure. 'That man,' said Lessing, 'makes noble shipwreck who is lost in seeking worlds.' If the

imaginative life can save the soul from acquiescence in the sordid, it well merits all the culture we can give it. The highest accuracy of impression and even the truest accuracy of history are often attained by the poet rather than by the word-grubbing scholar. Truth is not formal but vital, and if the poet's version be not exact in detail, it may be true in spirit. Fact may be correctly stated in the fullest detail and yet be false. 'The imagination may be compared to Adam's dream: he awoke and found it truth.'[1] That is why the seer and the poet are needed to interpret life; for they get to the heart of an incident when others are only fumbling at the fringe. The highest truths are not reached by analysis, and the deepest appeal is not made to logic. We may dissect and dissolve and analyse and get at many a hidden fact by the way, while the secret has vanished. The life and meaning and flavour and vital breath elude prosaic methods. To imagination we owe all our creative arts, poetry and painting and music.

Without it even science itself would be a gathering of observations and chaotic facts lack-

[1] Keats.

ing order or meaning or law. The prosaic observer may make the most careful observations, but it needs a higher faculty to set the observations in their true relations and to make order and beauty out of the mass. Most of the great discoveries in science have been made by this power to imagine unseen conditions. The mere observer of nature is smothered by details, a confused crowd of phenomena, and it needs the man of inductive and intuitive genius to reach the natural law which includes and explains them. There must be in scientific research accurate observation and careful arrangement of facts, but every step in advance is attained by a great imaginative effort which takes an unproved working hypothesis and applies it to the facts. A whole chapter might be written on the place of imagination in the sphere of the exact sciences, and on the mistakes which have been made here through deficient imagination. All great scientists have had something of the poetic vision. The Copernican astronomy, the law of gravitation, all wide syntheses of the facts of nature, began with assumptions and were the fruit of scientific imagination. The most fertile work of our day in the region of biology

has been done on the hypothesis of evolution. To banish imagination from science would be to deprive it of its chief instrument.

Morality, also, divorced from it becomes mere legalism, the formal working of a puppet-show. Prosaic morality means either moderatism or pharisaism, unattractive, and in the true sense unreal. As Thackeray with one of his keen thrusts of genial cynicism says, 'The bad do much harm, but no one knows how much evil the good do.' There are endless illustrations in this region of how the letter kills and the spirit alone can give life. As for theology, it has too often been cursed by the barrenness of the commonplace. Unimaginative theology has been a fearful weight on the Church. In exegesis and interpretation and exhortation, an ounce of poetry often outvalues a bushel of some other theological qualities. Sanctified imagination is the great ally of religion. It gives the wings for the higher flight of the spirit of man. The world will never be without its witness to the unseen. The wind bloweth where it listeth, convincing the world of God. If we had more imagination we would have more faith. We would not mistake the place

and power of religion, and we would never get very far from God —

> As German Boehme never cared for plants
> Until it happed, a-walking in the fields,
> He noticed all at once that plants could speak,
> Nay, turned with loosened tongue to talk with him.
> That day the daisy had an eye indeed.[1]

Thus the value of the imagination is not restricted to the poet and novelist and dramatist, but is needed for all forms of intellectual effort. It is of use to the historian and the statesman, no less than to the man of science and the theologian. In the reconstruction of a scene of the past, in revealing the steps by which a social or political change came about, how institutions grew and withered, how empires rose and fell, the social conditions of a former age, all these need an imaginative representation. The most careful sifting of evidence and verifying of fact, and the most formidable array of authorities, will not reconstruct for us any scene of history without the illumination of imagination. The statesman, too, must use this gift if he is to be more than an opportunist. He must have some vision of the large issues at

[1] Browning, *Men and Women* — 'Transcendentalism.'

stake, and make some forecast of state policy if he would have any sort of permanent success. Philosophy would have been saved from some of its errors if it had been sometimes a little less prosaic. Materialism as a philosophical theory, as well as a practical scheme of living, is due to a want of imagination. It shuts the eyes to the whole course of man's religious history, and to the spiritual facts which are as truly facts as any on the plane of material science. Romanes, who gave his life to science, wrote as one of his last judgments: 'It is much more easy to disbelieve than to believe. This is obvious on the side of reason, but it is also true on that of spirit, for to disbelieve is in accordance with environment or custom, while to believe necessitates a spiritual use of the imagination. For both these reasons, very few unbelievers have any justification, either intellectual or spiritual, for their own unbelief. Unbelief is usually due to indolence, often to prejudice, and never a thing to be proud of.'[1]

In the conduct of ordinary life we are more indebted to imagination than perhaps we think. Memory is a form of imagination, without which

[1] *Thoughts on Religion*, p. 144.

the past would be a blank. It is reproductive imagination, the power of reproducing a mental image of what has occurred. The creative imagination is the faculty of the poet, the power of making new images, of combining into beautiful forms the ideal aspects of life —

> And as imagination bodies forth
> The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
> Turns them to shapes.

It may be said that the differences of intellect in men are differences of imagination. To all who live at the same period there is a great common body of thought. We have most things in common, and variety is created by the way we use our heritage. It is imagination which gives distinction and colour and individuality to thought. A man takes of the common stock and appropriates it, makes it his own by investing it with his imagination, as Shakespeare took the plots and stories and even the plays of his predecessors and made everything 'suffer a sea change into something rich and strange,' or as Burns took the songs of his country and re-created them by the heat of his own heart.

Still further in ordinary life we see that the

divine quality of sympathy is the fruit of imagination, by which we put ourselves in the place of others and feel with them and therefore for them. Shelley in his *Defence of Poetry* said, 'A man to be greatly good must imagine intensely and comprehensively; he must put himself into the place of another and of many others; the pains and pleasures of his species must become his own.' Most of men's cruelty and callousness is due to lack of imagination, to an incapacity to understand feelings different from our own. We are not able to project ourselves into the situation of others, or we could never fail of sympathy. The world cannot understand a poet going half mad with grief and indignation at the sorrows and shames of a butchered Armenia, because the world has too dense and dull a soul to enable it to really appreciate the deeds of horror. True imagination is the great ally on the side of God to fight against selfishness. We would love our neighbour as ourselves, if only we could imagine him as easily as we can think of ourselves. Sympathy begins by an imaginative getting out of self and getting into the place of another. We become him for the time. If he is in pain,

we have some idea of what he is suffering. We feel what we imagine he feels. We can be accurately said to share his experience. Much of the smallness and meanness of life results from narrowing the horizon and restricting the vision to the bounds of self. Our hearts would be enlarged if our imagination were kept bright and active. We sympathise with that which we are able to picture to ourselves. To see a child run over in the street fills us with grief, and with desire to help. We know theoretically that children in India in a time of famine must suffer much greater pain; or we know that in all our cities the cry of the children goes up to God for their joyless, woful youth — we know it when some specially bad case is unearthed by the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, — but we have not enough imagination to give us more than a spasmodic sympathy in both cases. Imagination is thus the great social faculty which binds us to each other. It needs culture, and can be cultivated as all other faculties are cultivated — by use. We must not steel our hearts against the joy and sorrow of others. Try, for example, to realise the feelings of your friends and intimates

and neighbours; try to picture to yourself what a certain word or a certain line of action will mean to them; try to imagine how you can bring light or gloom, pleasure or pain, and you will develop tact, which is just the faculty of *touch*, fineness of sensation, which will keep you from hurting any human soul.

In religion there is room for the use of imagination. It is that which enables us to see past the forms and externals of faith and worship to the spirit within. All kinds of idolatry are due to too little, and not too much, imagination. In the early church an image was only a symbol, and the spiritual man never dreamed of worshipping the image but only used it to assist him to think of the reality for which the symbol stood. But the prosaic soul soon mistook the form for the substance. Religion always suffers from the lack of imagination. If we had more of the poetic power of faith, we would see without needing so much prompting and directing. If imagination is as the window which lets in light to the house, then sanctified imagination is as the coloured windows of a great cathedral which flood the place with glory and stain the noble

pillars. The high realms of faith can only be explored by the sanctified imagination. Imagination gives wings to thought, enables it to soar, and keeps it from grovelling in the dust. Faith is glorified imagination, which embodies the unseen and gives shape to the unknown.

Think of Christ's use of the imagination. He used it continually in His teaching, which was ever the poetic expression of truth. He spoke in parables in which all nature is made to preach, the corn and the lilies, and the trees and the birds. The great lesson of His teaching and the great purpose of His life was to get men to imagine the infinite love of God. If we would strive to comprehend that wondrous conception, if we would give ourselves to the thought of it, if we would steep our souls in it, if we would live in it by day and dream of it by night, we would keep God in our lives. If we would but imagine the love of God, dwell on it, hug the thought of it to our heart, life would be a home to us instead of a mere shelter. The house of life would be a home, not bare walls, but a place where love dwells; and sanctified imagination would hang in the chambers of the house pictures of the good,

the beautiful, the true. It is the vision and not the possession which gives life its value, the quest and not the conquest, the attempt and not the attainment, the dream and not the fulfilment, the aspiration and not the achievement.

This spiritual imagination can be cultivated as poetic imagination can be. The culture of the imagination is the culture of the ideal. It is the culture of faith and the culture of prayer. If we imagine the love of God, if we pray for the mind of the Master, if in every difficulty we stop to think what He would have done and said, if we make His teaching and will and life the test and example, if we keep ever the vision of Christ before us, we will live the higher imaginative life, not always down among the dust and sordidness of the world, but sometimes among the angels and the spirits of just men made perfect. It purifies passion and cleanses the heart even to go with Him in fancy through His earthly life, and to realise that He is the same to-day in nature and in purpose, to live with Him over again in His life in Galilee and Jerusalem, to follow Him from Nazareth to Capernaum, to Bethany, to Samaria, to Gethsemane, to make it all real

to us, and then realise that He is as He was, and so practise the presence of Christ with us to-day. 'Methought I was as if I had seen Him born,' says John Bunyan in *Grace Abounding*, 'as if I had seen Him grow up, as if I had seen Him walk through this world from the cradle to the cross, to which also when He came I saw how gently He gave Himself to be hanged and nailed on it for my sins and wicked doing. Also as I was musing on this His progress it dropped on my spirit that He was ordained for the slaughter. When I have considered also the truth of His resurrection, I have seen as if He had leaped out of the grave's mouth for joy that He was risen again and had got the conquest over our dreadful foes.' Browning might have been translating these words of Bunyan into poetry, as he was certainly expressing the same thought in the passage —

> Oft have I stood by Thee —
> Have I been keeping lonely watch by Thee —
> In the damp night by weeping Olivet,
> Or leaning on Thy bosom, proudly less,
> Or dying with Thee on the lonely cross,
> Or witnessing Thy bursting from the tomb.

There is another side to the consideration of this high subject which shows us the need of

wise training and guidance. Like the other great gifts of man, imagination has suffered in the house of its friends. There is no human faculty which has been looked more askance on and been more condemned. The attack has come from three very commanding quarters. It has been carried on in the name of morality and philosophy and religion.

Morally, the imagination is seen to be the seat of all evil. Sin is conceived there and harboured there before it is brought out into the open as full-blown fact. A great moral writer in his impeachment of the imagination has declared, 'Here is the devil's lurking-place, the very nest of foul and delusive spirits.' To the moralist, therefore, it often appears as the seat of evil and only evil, the breeding-place of all the sins. Temptation comes by presenting to the imagination in a pleasing and alluring fashion sinful acts. The psychology of sin is thus stated by St. James, 'Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin.' Evil enters the mind by suggestion, by playing on the fancy. It captures the will and the heart through the imagination. Evil

thoughts, dallied with and made welcome, blossom into evil deeds.

By the philosopher also imagination sometimes is taken to be the one and inveterate foe of reason, keeping back the progress of truth by creating a fanciful region where a man can find a spurious peace from troublesome thought. Pascal calls it 'that deceitful part of man, the mistress of error and falsity, the more knavish that she is not always so, or she would be an infallible rule of truth if only she were an infallible rule of lying.' To him it is a proud potentate who loves to rule and dominate over its enemy, reason. When reason would make a man unhappy, and by the very pain lead to truer thinking and sounder living, imagination will sometimes bring contentment and so triumph over reason. Buckle, in his *History of Civilisation*, while admitting that in a complete, well balanced mind the imagination and the understanding have each their respective parts to play and are auxiliary to each other, thinks it undoubtedly true that in a majority of instances the understanding is too weak to curb the imagination and restrain its dangerous licence. He believes that the tendency of advancing civilisation is to remedy this dispropor-

tion and to invest the reasoning powers with authority at the expense of the imagination.

By the theologian also it has been condemned as the cause of the delusions and the lying visions and the ecstatic impressions which lead men astray into all sorts of unstrung and hysterical states. Jonathan Edwards speaks strongly of the delusions in religion fostered by trusting to the impressions made on the imagination, and thinks that though often at first it seems to beget a persuasion of the truth of invisible things, yet the ultimate tendency is to draw men off from the word of God and to cause them to reject true religion.

Now, there would not be such a remarkable condemnation if there were not some ground of accusation. It would not be easy to account for so virulent a charge by so many and so great thinkers, if there were not facts which give colour to it even though it be accepted as a one-sided statement. There is at least enough to make us convinced that, while imagination has a true and strong place in life and religion, and while the duty of its culture is plain, there is an equal necessity for its adequate control. Imagination must of course be accepted like all the other qualities of mind. No alarmist talk of its danger,

either in the name of reason or morality or religion, can alter the fact. It can put us on our guard that we may avoid its abuse, but unless we stultify our whole intellectual life we must be content to possess imagination as one of the gifts of mind. Not only so, but, as we have seen, it is the highest and most precious attribute we have. No danger of its misuse could warrant anything like an attempt at extinction of this faculty. Even if it were possible, the policy of repression in itself is a failure. Its fruits may sometimes be vagueness and obscurity, or extravagance and hysteria, or worse still, morbidness and disease. But with all our gifts we must take the thick and the thin together. When we call attention to abuse, we do not mean to deny use; when we point to disease, we do not condemn health. The power of use implies the possibility of abuse. The place of imagination in art and life and religion is secure, and we only help to make it more secure when we truly discriminate; and we make its culture more possible for ourselves and for all when we use restraint. There can be no true discipline and education of imagination without strong control of it. The training of the imagination is necessary for its

own best life as well as for our character. The depraving effect of a corrupt imagination has many illustrations in every region of life.

In this connection we naturally think first of the huge place which the literature of fiction has taken in our time. It has earned its place as a great instrument for the interpretation of life, and plays a large part in mental recreation. We know the value of romance when it is the healthy expression of a healthy imagination, but we cannot fail to know the blighting, polluting power it has when it has ceased to be healthy. So much so, that we can understand the mood of mind which makes the moralist who is a lover of his kind speak as though he would sweep the whole art from the life of a man. It is rather strange that in defence of evil literature, the claim of realism should be made on behalf of what is admittedly a purely imaginative art. Want of art is often responsible for what passes for realism. It is want of creative imagination, and that means lack of the capacity for the business the writers have taken in hand. They speak of transcripts from life, but life is not so mean and stupid as such art sometimes makes it. George Meredith, who will be accepted as a

master, calls it 'soundings and probings of poor humanity which the world accepts for the very bottom-truth if their dredge brings up sheer refuse of the abominable. The world imagines those to be at our nature's depth who are impudent enough to expose its muddy shallows. It is true of its kind, though the dredging of nature is the miry form of art.'[1] One loves to think of the greatest romancist of them all, Sir Walter Scott, with his nobility of soul, and to remember that there is not a base thought, not an evil suggestion, not a morbid feeling, not an impure word in the whole magnificent array of volumes; and we cannot escape the thought that a man's work here as elsewhere is only the reflection of himself, and in this case we feel that there is revealed a simple, brave, gentle, and generous heart. There is nothing so harmful in the world as a bad book, because it touches the subtlest and most delicate of our powers, the imagination. It leaves a scar on the heart and a stain on the mind.

Our moral responsibility in connection with this great gift is not confined to approving or disapproving of the artistic work of others.

[1] *Diana of the Crossways.*

Control is needed over our own imagination to keep it from running away with us, and becoming master instead of servant. If we have not a firm hand on the reins of imagination, one of two moral evils results.

(1) We will be plagued by the sins of emptiness, and our life can at best be a useless dream. This is common in youth before the mind has force enough to control the fancy, and bring it into subjection. Many precious days and years are spent in dreams without any fulfilment. It is specially the temptation of the student, and often the finer the mind the more subtle the temptation. Many a life has been enervated by sinful indulgence in the pleasures of the imagination, even when these are pure and innocent enough. All of us know men who should have done better work for the world than they now will ever do, because their powers of deciding and acting have been eaten away. Absent-mindedness is not always the attribute of genius, but is oftener the fruit of idleness and feckless mooning. Most young people love to dream of themselves achieving great things in some beautiful future, watching themselves playing a magnificent part as a great artist, or orator, or scholar, or

lawyer, or man of business — the dream of a full theatre with applauding crowds. It is usually an unsanctified dream. Imagination was not given us for such idle and selfish fancies. Our life to-day, and especially our intellectual life, is cursed with false ambitions, and these are largely fostered by such self-indulgence of the imagination. This dream-power of projecting ourselves into ideal scenes, and of anticipating the future can be a great blessing, but becomes a positive weakness if it does not inspire to moral action. We need to be master of ourselves and of our faculties. We need the self-control which will give us a grip of ourselves, and not let life and its tasks slip past us.

(2) But failure to restrain imagination rarely ends in such negative failure, bad as that is. Here also the empty house is the ready resort of the seven devils. Imagination uncontrolled usually means imagination run riot. The power we have of making mental pictures and calling up images at will means that these pictures and images may be evil. We cannot forget the psychology of temptation, how it gains foothold in the imagination, and entices and seduces and draws away of its own lust. The first step in the ruin of many

a man's life is by the indulgence of a misplaced curiosity. No moral catastrophe comes all of a sudden. It has a long history of evil imaginings, finding pleasure in them, giving them house-room, living with them and loving them. A man is a cheat in heart, dreaming of easy gains, before he becomes dishonest in act. A man is impure in thought before he becomes profligate in life. A man lets self dominate his mind before he becomes selfish in deed. Imagination is polluted before vice is born. Sin gets its secure seat in the soul before it comes out to view in conduct and habits. Self-control must begin here, because imagination affects the whole man to the very finger-tips. Unholy thoughts end in unhallowed acts; evil imaginings translate themselves into life.

Christ in His diagnosis of sin is not content with mentioning its manifestations, but points to the baneful root. He teaches us that the genesis of murder is anger in the mind, and the genesis of adultery is lust in the eye, and the genesis of revenge is hardness of heart. Keep thine heart with diligence, for out of it are the issues of life. Look well after the beginnings of evil, as it sneaks for its lurking place in the imagination. It is a terrible transformation when the house of

life, which should be a home with order and cleanliness and peace, is a sepulchre which, though whitened without, is full of dead men's bones and all manner of excess. When the imagination is corrupt, how can the life escape the taint? A man cannot take fire into his bosom and his clothes not be burned. If we would save our imagination from becoming a nest of foul spirits, we must determine to endure no evil thing before our eyes. Surely it is the ultimate failure to have in the house of life, instead of pictures of the good, the beautiful, and the true, a gallery of the obscene, a gallery of pictures impure and foul, humiliating the high soul of man, and chaining the life to a body of death.

In addition to this need for control of imagination in the region of morals, there is no less need for its control in the realm of the spiritual. An untutored imagination in religion is ever in danger of false mysticism. All true religion has of course a mystical heart; for it means direct communion with God, and implies the open face and the beatific vision. But, because of this, delusions of all kinds are possible, and Jonathan Edwards' impeachment of the imagination finds some basis in fact. Uncontrolled imagination has

led to the most fatal errors. Our Lord, who knew the heart of man, warned against false Christs and false prophets, who would show great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray if possible the very elect. St. Paul also warned his disciples against these very signs and lying wonders. We see how needful the warning was, when we think of the false supernaturalisms and mysticisms and occult arts and theosophies and spiritualisms that have afflicted the race since. Apart from all such gross delusions, it is always dangerous to trust too much to a susceptible imagination in times of religious excitement. We need to remember that religion does not depend on our states of mind and feeling, and that faith is not dependent on personal visions. The danger of paying heed to the pictures of a lively and excitable imagination is that it loses sight of the truly spiritual side of religion, and lays stress on what is after all only another form of materialism. It has also a danger to the individual in puffing him up with conceit at the thought that he is favoured with a special revelation to himself; and pride is the first of the seven deadly sins.

There is a place in religion for sanctified

imagination, but it must be restrained by the practical needs of living, and restrained most of all by the endeavour to keep step with Christ. Whatever is inconsistent with His teaching, and out of harmony with the simplicity of His life and the beauty of His spirit, must be dismissed. Idle curiosity about the mysteries of providence, empty speculation about a future life, receive no support from His example. They are an insult to true faith, which among its spiritual contents includes patience. To be a Christian is to submit the whole life to Christ, judging all things by His spirit. Safety for the imaginative life is got by this submission, which saves it from excess, guards it from evil, and uses it to the best advantage. It is made a home of all that is fair and lovely in the Father's lovely world, and through it comes lasting pleasure in all that is good and beautiful and true. The life He offers is not emasculated and feeble, but rich and full and joyous, with all the world's true treasures at command, because we are Christ's, and Christ is God's.

CULTURE OF HEART

'Religion consists much in holy affections.'

— JONATHAN EDWARDS.

CHAPTER VII

CULTURE OF HEART

THE mistake which many advocates of culture have made is that they limit it to the sphere of intellect. Culture has thus been looked on as a forcing ground for prigs, developing the superior person who is above the sentiments and prejudices which move the mass of men. Such a man looks with contemptuous pity on the ordinary motives of human action, the feelings and passions and instincts and enthusiasms of the vulgar crowd. He sits above the tumult and criticises in a cynical way, professing to make reason the guide of life, while others are content with feeling. The need for reason and the duty of thought we have admitted, but if emotion can go astray, reason can also be a will-of-the-wisp. It can be as much the plaything of prejudice as even sentiment. To set it up as the infallible rule would put the world more at sixes and sevens than ever; for

as a matter of fact men are not solely, if even chiefly, united by reason. All the permanent relationships of life are held together by the affections rather than by the intellect. The culture which neglects the facts and forces of human nature other than mental is not culture; for it is condemned by its onesidedness. If men were isolated individuals there might be some excuse for such narrowness. But human nature is essentially social: men are developed only in society. So, even for the sake of the individual himself, culture must be social in its objects and seek the good of others, and as the great nexus of men is not the intellect but the affections, there must be room for culture of the heart.

Intellect in itself will not ennoble life. The very power of reason, without a corresponding development of the higher feelings, would only make man a more dangerous brute than all other animals. The sensual when combined with the intellectual results in the devilish. Shakespeare draws such a character for us in Iago. His selfish scheming, his accurate reading of the hearts of others so that he plays off skilfully their different feelings and passions against each other, his treachery to friend and hypocrisy to

foe, his cold-blooded policy in using living men and women as pawns in his own game, his cynical contempt for what he considers the weakness of his victims, as when, after working up Othello to the climax of jealousy, he sneers 'thus credulous fools are caught'—all these make him perhaps the most consummate villain in literature. Iago's want of heart damns his intellect. This is not a mere fancy picture. The world has often been cursed with such a combination of the sensual and the intellectual. The history of almost every country can give illustrations of such men who attained power by trampling on the rights of men. Caesare Borgia, the son of his unscrupulous and only less hated father, Pope Alexander VI., is such an instance in the renaissance history of Italy. With force of intellect cursed by selfish ambition, a patron of the arts, pictured by Macchiavelli as a great ruler, he because of his very gifts made his name a terror and his memory a shame. Perfidy, sacrilege, assassination, vileness unspeakable, were as his daily food till men had to kill him like a mad dog. The mere stupid sensualist lacks the power to be a world-curse, though he blights all he touches; but when

added to that there is the cold selfishness of real mental power he can make his name a hissing. Intellect without the affections can create a monster. Conscience is needed to regulate life, the heart is needed to guide it. Even when intellect is not dragged into the service of evil, if it is without the warmth of affection, it is only

> Faultily faultless, icily regular, splendidly null,
> Dead perfection — no more.

Absence of emotion does not necessarily mean, as we are inclined to think, the presence of the practical virtues, commonsense and courage. We imagine that coldness of temperament implies an abnormal development of wisdom and the best sort of prudence. It may be only dulness and insensibility all round. The people who cannot afford one single expression of sympathy, who are seldom kind and never really tender-hearted, have not necessarily even more commonsense than their more susceptible neighbours. Some men, it may be, seem for a time to get a clear brain from a stifled heart. Hardness of heart may seem necessary for some kinds of success, but it is not a success worth having. A man with very fine feelings perhaps

handicaps himself in the attainment of some ambitions, but these ambitions are not the highest and the best. It is no great ideal for a man to be like Job's leviathan, whose 'heart is as firm as a stone; yea as hard as a piece of the nether millstone.' The self-seeker may carve out a great career, may achieve wealth or position, may astonish by his brilliance and power, may make men admire him and envy him, but he will not make them love him. He will not grapple hearts to him as with bands of steel. Pity is the gate to influence of the highest and deepest sort. The empire of souls is given not to the clever but to the loving, not to those who command our attention by their force of brain but to those who touch us with their sympathy, their devotion, their sacrifice. The true test even of art in painting and literature is not that it inspires wonder at its cleverness but that it inspires a large sense of the mystery of the world and life, and a large tolerance and pity. The world is held in thrall not by the great conquerors and statesmen and financiers but by the great sentimentalists, the poets and prophets and mystics and saints. Men are melted by the example and story of all who

have lived and died for men, and by the work of those who by their feeling have interpreted the dumb desires and speechless pain of the race. Even their mistakes are forgotten, as with Shelley when we know how true these words of his are of himself —

> I who am as a nerve o'er which do creep
> The else-unfelt oppressions of this earth.

There is a brilliant saying of Horace Walpole, that this world is a comedy to those who think, and a tragedy to those who feel. It is also a true saying, but only on the surface. The comedy will not last long; it will become a greater tragedy to those who do *not* feel; for the only hope of a solution of the whole problem of existence lies in the discoveries of the heart-life, and the only permanent union among men must be found not by logic but by love.

Now, the affections, like the other parts of our nature, need care and education and training. We seem to expect the life of the heart to go on of itself by what we call nature. The affections are natural, but not more so than physical or mental health is natural. We must set before ourselves the aim to live the life of the heart constantly and continually, just as we think it a

good thing to set before us the aim to live the life of thought. As the athlete must go into training for the perfection of his bodily powers, and as the scholar must give himself to learning even when the flesh rebels, so we must set ourselves to cultivate the affections. We need to encourage and develop the life of the heart by consistently setting before ourselves the practice of all true and noble sentiments. This is one of the implications of our original starting-point of the duty of proportional development.

How can the heart-life be trained? The precepts are plain enough, though the practice may be difficult — precepts such as 'be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another.' The sentiment of kindness is got by being kind. The sentiment of gentleness is got by being gentle, by stopping the cutting word at the teeth if it cannot be stopped before, by crushing down the harsh judgment, by replacing the cruel thought with a tender one, by persistently practising kindness, by doing the generous deed, by speaking the encouraging word, by thinking no evil. This training of the Christian sentiment cannot be left to haphazard, but must be accepted deliberately as a duty, and persisted in con-

stantly as a plan of life; for if we are not deliberately kind, we will often be cruel if only through thoughtlessness. Some may have no opportunities of living the life of thought, but all have opportunities to live the life of the heart, by gentle courtesy to servants and dependants, by consideration for friends and comrades, by doing something and giving something to alleviate human sorrow.

De Musset said that most men have in them a poet who dies young. The tragedy of that early death, the death of fine feeling and generous emotion! We need continually to replenish the heart: the fire dies out for want of fuel. It is so easy to become cynical and *blasé*. Selfishness soon eats into every generous ideal like an acid. A cheap contempt comes easily when we look to the follies of men rather than to their sorrows, but contempt is a wrong to the man despised, and a wrong to human nature, and a wrong to our own selves. Impatience with others and indignation against them, if these feelings are not the fruit of love, are an insult to our common humanity. There is a satire even in the name of righteousness which is the devil's weapon; there is an anger even in the cause of

good which is sin. Charity will often disarm criticism by its generous refusal to throw too cold a light upon the infirmities of men, and this not through the weakness which pretends not to see, but because it sees more deeply and widely. It softens the sight because it sharpens the insight. It touches life tenderly and looks on it gently. We need to bear and forbear, exercise patience and tolerance and pity. We must learn to take the generous side in all the causes that emerge. Lamartine called Christianity an insurrection of justice in favour of the weak. There is nothing sadder than to see young men always taking the cynical and prudential view of life, and never practising themselves in standing up for the weak and oppressed. Better to be a partisan of lost causes than to have the heart seared by self-interest or callousness. The light of generous enthusiasm dies out soon enough into the common light of day. The world's use and wont soon enough deprives men of their unselfish passion. In all the problems of our day as a nation and as a society, we should expect to see the young on the generous side. Certainly, if religion is to be real to us, we must learn to feel, we must culti-

vate pure sentiment, we must set to ourselves as a task the training of our heart-life. 'You have heard many outcries,' said Ruskin, 'against sensation lately; but I can tell you it is not less sensation we want, but more. The ennobling difference between one man and another—between one animal and another—is precisely in this, that one feels more than another. If we were sponges, perhaps sensation might not be easily got from us; if we were earthworms, liable at every instant to be cut in two by the spade, perhaps too much sensation might not be good for us. But being human creatures, *it is* good for us; nay, we are only human in so far as we are sensitive, and our honour is precisely in proportion to our passion.'

We are afraid of sentiment. We kill our affections by hiding them even from those we love; we let our friends die without telling them how much we owe them; the sweetest souls of our households pass from us before we even know how we have taken everything and given nothing. For want of sentiment men are hardening into worldlings, money-grubbers, materialists, sensualists. We deprecate passion; and noble life is dying because there is in our midst

little passion for anything great. Every true and unselfish passion purifies, it lifts the life to a higher platform. Even the passion of a great sorrow has saving power. We moralise over the foolish loyalties of men, their capacity of creating heroes out of very inferior material, such as the great Jacobite sentiment in Scotland for the Stuarts. Even if in the judgment of history the heroes do turn out to be unworthy, the devotion of honest hearts is not always wasted — it makes them worthy. Mark Rutherford in the *Revolution in Tanner's Lane* describes the tremendous ovation Louis XVIII. got in London. 'There was a great crowd in the street when he came out of the hotel, and immense applause; the mob crying out "God bless your Majesty" as if they owed him all they had and even their lives. It was very touching, people thought at the time, and so it was. Is there anything more touching than the waste of human loyalty and love? As we read the history of the Highlands, or a story of Jacobite loyalty such as that of Cooper's *Admiral Bluewater,* dear to boys, we sadden that destiny should decree that in a world in which piety is not too plentiful, it should run so pitifully to waste, and that men and women

should weep hot tears over bran-stuffing and wax.' But it is better that men and women should in sincere if mistaken enthusiasm give their heart's treasure to what we think only bran-stuffing and wax, than that they should imagine that there is nothing in the world to love passionately, and none they should loyally believe in and follow. Hero-worship is a great factor in education, as all who have to do with boys can testify.

Emotion is at the basis of life, even of intellectual life. It is folly to imagine that thinking is at its highest when feeling is at its lowest. The life of the heart is necessary for the life of thought. True culture here does not interfere with other culture, but rather gives it new grace and fills its incompleteness. A poet will have more exalted feelings and thoughts at the sight of the stars than an astronomer with all his science if he is a mere observer and recorder of facts. There is no great thought when it is not transfused with great feeling. In moments of emotional excitement the intellect can grasp ideas that otherwise would be impossible. There is no profound morality which is not touched with emotion. Morality will not remain a permanent force in

life unless it is supported by purified sentiment and by personal love. Both as individuals and as a community we suffer from too little true sentiment. We have too little of the high and holy fear that is the beginning of wisdom, too little of the deep indignation at wilful evil, too little of the keen sorrow that takes on the heart the burden and mystery of life. We doom our emotional nature to seek satisfaction in petty feelings and in transient thrills. There is no religion even where the heart is not moved. The great revelation is that God is love. If He were only wisdom and power and justice and righteousness, we could at the best stand to Him in the relation of subjects; but when we know that He is also love, we can stand in the relation of children. One of the fruits of faith is seen in the quickening and deepening of sentiment, the creation of finer feelings of pity and compassion and charity. It produces sympathy, and is far removed from the purely intellectual outlook of the man whose boast is that he regulates life by cold reason.

Here also true education implies restraint. Some human emotions, such as joy and compas-

sion, are of a high and noble character, and can usually be expressed without much danger of abuse, though even here, as we shall see, care is needed; but there are others equally natural and spontaneous which always need the most careful watching, such as grief and fear and anger. Some schools of philosophy have insisted on these feelings being curbed, and as far as possible crushed, as if it were unworthy of our manhood to give them any place, making the ideal of life a passionless calm. But the true way is not to attempt to kill emotions, but to purify them, and our appeal is to preserve the life of the heart by insisting on the need of control. How great that need is we can see, when we think how life suffers when emotion is allowed to run to seed. We know in ordinary practice how feckless the most sympathetic people may be, and how unreliable they often are at a pinch. They spill themselves all over the place, and when they have poured out their sentiment there is nothing left. In times of difficulty, how we value what we call the sober mind, the man of sane judgment who has a grip of himself and thus of the situation, who never lets himself go in idle words or in rash resolves. The facile, shallow tempera-

ment that easily boils to passion and as easily freezes to despair, that moves now to extravagant hopes and again to extravagant fears, that lives ever subject to storms, to swellings, and tumults of soul, can give little practical help in a crisis.

We come to this, to begin with, that however good and necessary emotion may be, reason must be used as the ballast of feeling. Emotion unbalanced by reason splutters itself out in sound or degenerates into mere whim or prejudice. It is terrible to think how much life is ruled by mere prejudice, tossed about by every wave. 'Fine feelings without vigour of reason are in the situation of a peacock's tail dragging in the mud.'[1] It is dangerous to lose control of any of our powers, and uncontrolled emotion is like a bull in a china-shop. To know that we are in the zone of danger here, we need only remember the common tendency to relapse after a violent strain of feeling, whether it be on the one side an unregulated ecstasy of joy, or on the other an unrestrained flood of sorrow. If it lives at all after such a relapse, it lives only as a feeble sentimentalism. The man of feeling, if he lets his feeling run away

[1] Foster.

with him, will probably become an empty dreamer. When sentiment in excess and unbalanced is at last exhausted, its place is often filled by a false sentimentalism. Sentiment is the very soul of human life, keeping it true and sweet and sound: sentimentalism turns the wholesome force into something degrading and diseased.

The urgent need for the guidance of the feelings will be seen even in the region where there is least of all danger of excess, that of compassion. Even here we see that the instincts of pity and help and charitable emotion need wise and careful guidance if we are to avoid doing more harm than good. Many a benefaction has missed its aim through the lack of wise direction and prudent oversight. If men thought more of the remoter consequences of their acts, there would be more judgment in their charity as well as in their ordinary conduct. Indiscriminate charity may be only another and subtler form of selfishness, merely to get rid of the particular distress that happens to be present. Philanthropy, indeed, needs more wisdom than it usually receives. For example, if industry is discouraged by any well-meant benevolence or by a law prompted by philanthropy, the ultimate result will be only an

increase of poverty and distress. This is anything but a plea for callousness and for the lack of sensitiveness in which we saw that the most aggravated forms of cruelty have their roots. It is a plea for the wisdom that will bring to bear on the problems of our times all the powers of mind and not merely the casual charitable feeling of the moment.

Not only in the region of charity, but along the whole line of life, we find that when true and pure and wise sentiment is exhausted, a spurious substitute is often found in some form of sentimentalism. It finds many expressions in literature, as in Sterne and the school of Shandyism, which is perhaps its most maudlin form, and as to-day in works of fiction which flood us with counterfeit pathos. Rousseau is an example of another false form of sentiment, with his affectation of sympathy, a luxury of pity without any grip on the heart or any correspondence in the life. With all its great interest of matter and of style, his *Confessions* often sickens with its mock heroics and its drench of unreal sentiment. We are compelled to assent to Professor James's judgment, though inserted casually in a chapter on Psychology, 'When a resolve or a fine glow of

feeling is allowed to evaporate without bearing practical fruit, it is worse than a chance lost; it works so as positively to hinder future resolutions and emotions from taking the normal path of discharge. There is no more contemptible type of human character than that of the nerveless sentimentalist and dreamer, who spends his life in a weltering sea of sensibility and emotion, but who never does a manly concrete deed. Rousseau, inflaming all the mothers of France, by his eloquence, to follow Nature and nurse their babies themselves, while he sends his own children to the foundling hospital, is the classical example of what I mean.'

There is an elevation of mind where pure emotion raises thought to its highest power and feeling suffuses reason, so that the life is ever saved from becoming dully formal or inhumanly cold. That is one thing; but it is quite another thing when the mind is open to be played on by every wayward gust of feeling, in vehement joy or ungovernable sorrow, never free from the possibility of tumult. We cannot live in spasms, and the best results of life are attained in calm and serious effort, in submission of will and resignation of heart. In practical life, when true

sentiment is lost, excitement is made to take its place. It becomes a feverish lust to fill up the void. Feeling, like fire, is a good servant but a dangerous master. We are only saved from the danger when there is some sort of real correspondence in action with any feeling evoked. The danger of tragedy as a spectacle lies in the separation of the feelings excited from any opportunity to assist practically. Tragedy may, as Aristotle said, purge the soul with pity and with fear, but the danger is that men are satisfied and pleased with their own virtuous feelings; they applaud virtue and hiss vice, and go out to harden their hearts against the actual needs and claims. Augustine noted this of himself in the days when stage plays carried him away, full of images of his miseries and of tinder for his flames. He knew that to suffer in oneself is pain, and to suffer from sympathy with others is pity. 'But what sort of pity is this,' he asks, 'for the shams and shadows of the stage? For the auditor is not moved to succour, but only asked to grieve; and he applauds the actor of these fictions the more, the more he grieves. And if those human misfortunes, whether they be histories of olden times or mere fictions, be so acted that the spectator is

not moved to grief, he goes away disdainful and censorious; but if he be moved to grief, he stays intent and enjoys the tears he sheds.'

There is some warning for us all in this danger of losing control of what is one of our highest powers, whether it be in excessive indulgence in plays or music or novel-reading, or a futile sentimentalism that never inspires to anything. Even the highest religious excitement is a state of risk, and one of the commonest errors is to make religion consist of feeling and to judge of religious states according to the ardent sensibility or the passion and emotion displayed. A man may be melted to tears without any effect on life, and to him religious excitement may be as demoralising as any other form of dissipation. To be carried away with a flood of feeling even about God's love and the highest things in religion may be very different from true elevation of soul. We have admitted that there is no religion where the heart is not touched, but emotion is not the end of religion. It is a valuable instrument, a means to influence reason and conscience and will. Its great use is to drive a man with resistless force over the obstacles that keep him imprisoned in the channels of sense. The agitation and excite-

ment and tense feeling in the time of repentance and decision are not in themselves religion, and their great purpose is achieved when they make us repent or decide or act. Religious excitement needs to be saved from running to waste. It must be mastered and harnessed to achieve the ends of the spirit in a holy life and in noble service.

Thus, on every hand, we see that sentiment needs to be weighted on the one side by true thinking, and on the other by right action. These are the true means of control and guidance. It will be saved from running riot by larger views of truth, and by being made ever a provocative to good works. For example, in religion undue excitement and excessive emotion are restrained by cultivating large thoughts, and also by bringing the sentiment to the proof of action in actual life. This is not to make a cold and unemotional state the ideal, but rather the opposite: it is to preserve the force of feeling in its true vigour and freshness. The power of religious worship to regulate emotion and control excitement lies in the first means suggested, the cultivation of large thoughts. When the mind is off its balance, either with joy or sorrow, with rapture or remorse, it is calmed and

steadied by being brought into the presence of God in prayer or praise. It breaks the current of passion, and brings the soul again to equilibrium. Worship is a medicine of the soul to allay agitation and give right expression to any natural feeling.

The second test of sentiment which we have mentioned, is the practical one of putting it into practice. The emotion which is divorced from action is unsafe. Life is real and earnest, and though there is room for sentiment, there is none for the sentiment which destroys action and weakens life. After all, the test of steam is speed, and the test of emotion is motion: the test of pity is help: the test of the benevolent affections is benevolence. 'To feel is but to dream until we do.' We have sometimes seen a man enjoying a rich luxury of emotion, and have thought that what he needed most was a cold douche of reality, and that he never would be right until he made his feeling square with fact, and put it into practice. No matter how many and how good our sentiments are, our character cannot change for the better, but only for the worse, if we never attempt the concrete deed, if we never let the emotion drive us into moral effort.

Now all this may seem to leave us floundering amid contradictions. If at one time we declare that we are rotting at the heart for lack of sentiment and passion, and now speak cautiously of the danger of such tumult of soul; if, for example, at one time the teaching is that a man must be willing to be deceived sometimes rather than let his generous impulses be stifled, and now the teaching is that charitable emotion may be a source of evil. But the way out is simple, when we see that the restraint of heart is necessary for its own true culture. Emotion must be disciplined and trained, that it may not be squandered on foolish causes, or perverted into evil channels. Here, as elsewhere, the higher the gift the more terrible is its abuse. The gifts of the heart, being higher and more delicate than the gifts of the mind, have a greater gulf fixed between their highest and lowest forms. Love, which is the joy of life, may be its curse. The golden bond which links soul to soul may be a chain to bind the life to loathsomeness. Friendship may lead to heaven, or be 'procuress to the lords of hell.' The romance of life may itself be poisoned and become corruption. We see the need of wise and careful training in this region of our nature.

Religion, whose sphere is the heart, includes and combines the two opposites. To give God the heart is to give Him the issues of life. Christ unifies life for us. He safeguards every part of our being, and uses every power. He inspires passion, and regulates it. Evil desire and false sentiment will not live where He is. In proportion as He rules in the heart, conforming the life to His own likeness, the affections are safe; for He provides an infallible standard. He satisfies the craving for a perfect love, and sets great purposes before His lovers. He generates passion in the heart — His peerless passion for purity — His passion for weak folk, for justice and mercy and righteousness. Even in the fierce fight, He gives peace from the turmoil of contending voices without, and from the tumult of conflicting feelings within; for a man can say, from the safe anchorage of His love, 'My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed.'

CULTURE OF CONSCIENCE

'The foundation of culture, as of character, is at last the moral sentiment.' — EMERSON.

'The history of a man is his character.' — GOETHE.

CHAPTER VIII

CULTURE OF CONSCIENCE

CONSCIENCE has been called the voice of God in man, the divine speaking in the human. In our common language it is a divine spark kindled from heaven, and is as the meeting place of God with man. Through this we have the knowledge of good and evil, and have something that may be called an inward guide for conduct. But in our time, like every other part of nature and of man, conscience has been studied scientifically. Men have not been content simply to believe that conscience is a divine guide. They have asked, what is the origin of conscience, how did it come that we have this moral witness, excusing or accusing? They have tried to trace out its growth in the individual and in the community, and have written the natural history of conscience. The attempted explanations are not always satisfactory, as with Darwin, who explains it thus: 'The social in-

stincts are more persistent than the instinct of vengeance or the instinct to steal food when hungry, and at last man comes to feel that it is best for him to obey his more persistent instincts.' This does not carry us very far, and does not explain how men could get at what they feel to be an inviolable rule of obligation and duty for themselves, a moral imperative which says 'I ought,' and 'I ought not,' an inward law which experience teaches them they cannot disobey without suffering. The insufficiency of Darwin's explanation is exposed by himself when he continues: 'It is obvious that every one may, with an easy conscience, gratify his own desires, if they do not interfere with his social instincts, that is, with the good of others.' It may be the beginning of the natural history of conscience, but we have to travel a long way before we come within sight of what the word stands for in our ordinary language.

The inquiry has done much to make the subject clearer. We do see it to be a growth, and that moral life has continuity like all other life. The conscience of to-day is more enlightened than — is certainly different from — the conscience of a past age. There are things which would

not be tolerated now, which before were taken as a matter of course. The Christian conscience differs from the pagan conscience which it superseded. The mistake which is often made is the very strange one that because we know conscience to be a growth, because we can to some extent trace its origin, therefore it has lost its divine authority. It is a very common mistake to imagine that because we can understand in some measure how a thing came to be we have therefore explained it. A description of a process is supposed to be an explanation of existence. The same mistake is being made all along the line of our scientific investigation. Because we can see how life works and unfolds itself, developing from form to form, therefore we have disposed of the mystery of life. Because we can trace the genesis of mind, or at least can partially open up the stages of its development, therefore we have explained the mystery of mind. Sometimes even a scientific definition, if learnedly worded, is taken to be a sufficient explanation. Rather the opposite is the case. The more knowledge we possess regarding anything, the more reverence should we have; for the more do we see our essential ignorance.

All questions on the origin of conscience are practically of secondary importance. How it came that men have learned knowledge of right and wrong, how they came to recognise personal responsibility before an internal tribunal, how they were led to see this to be right and that to be wrong — the mere process is not of supreme value though it is of very great interest. What is of supreme importance is that we should accept the fact. The conscience is no more discredited by evolution than the body is. When we are compelled to modify the old intuitional theory of conscience, it does not lose its sacredness or its authority. We know that the Christian conscience, which imperfectly governs our civilisation, did not come full-grown by a miracle, like Minerva armed and complete out of the brain of Jove. It has grown, and is growing. It is the fruit of the spirit of Christ working in us and in the world. And we ourselves confess how partially we have realised it, what higher moral reaches remain open to us as a community and as individuals. It is our sorrow and shame that the conscience of the Church on many things should be so unenlightened, and the conscience of the world hard and untouched regarding many

social evils, and our own consciences not so tender and scrupulous and susceptible as they ought to be. We know that conscience has grown; for it is our prayer that it should grow.

Now, it is only in relation to others that it can thus grow. The chief good which our modern methods of study has brought us is the conviction that conscience is a social thing and is developed through society, and can only be permanent when it is registered on social conditions. It is not enough that one here and there should have higher aspirations and a purer standard than others. The work of the Church is to affect the public conscience; for as the social conscience is, so in the long run is the individual conscience. Take the things which are branded by law and custom as sins and crimes. Some of these things we cannot imagine ourselves, whether we would commit them or not, thinking of them otherwise than as sins and crimes. That is because they are indelibly burned into our conscience. But there are other things in business and in general life which are kept sinful to us just because of the public conscience on the subject. If our environment were changed, would we hold tenaciously to all the points of

moral living which we possess now? As a matter of fact it is found when such restraints are removed that often men revert to a lower level of moral life and thought. That is found too commonly in countries where there is no Christian standard and no public conscience on certain points.

But while that is true and represents the work the Church has to do to elevate the whole mass and Christianise the laws and institutions and the community generally, still conscience is also a personal thing as well as a social. The appeal to conscience can be made just because the individual can rise above the level of his day. To live according to the public conscience merely is to live a very somnolent moral life. After all it does not need a very strong spiritual sense and a highly vitalised conscience just to keep out of jail, and even to perform all that is expected of us in a creditable manner. Most of us do not deserve any great praise for being fairly decent and respectable, we are hedged in and protected so securely by an inherited conscience and the social conscience that is in the very atmosphere around us. It is all the conscience that many of us have. But this is not

enough. Conscience has its proper play when a man rises to a higher level of moral practice than that on all sides of him. Conscience is not merely a moral policeman to prevent outrages against the law of right. That is a low view of it, though general. The testimony of our conscience should not be merely a negative one denouncing sins — as with Shakespeare's Richard III.

> My conscience hath a thousand several tongues,
> And every tongue brings in a several tale,
> And every tale condemns me for a villain.

Conscience is not a mere registering machine to estimate the value of our particular acts, condemning us to remorse when we go far astray, but it may be a spiritual influence to prompt to a higher moral level. It is a teacher encouraging to purer and grander things, seeking to implant an aspiration after an ideal of virtue which will never be satisfied. That is why it is the voice of God, not only rebuking a man for evil, but calling him with irresistible impulse towards the good.

The feature of conscience in all its stages is the acceptance of obligation. The particular obligations have differed in the different stages, the ideas of right and wrong being often imperfect

enough. The history of conscience is a history of clearer conception of what we ought to, and, therefore, must be and do. It has been an education. The race had to learn to discriminate, and with every fresh light it has seen the path it must tread, and that for the time has been God's perfect will. Conscience has ever meant this sense of obligation, the idea of a law, a higher will, a standard somewhere to which we must conform. Obligation, constraint, almost moral necessity, have been laid on men. I ought, you ought, we ought. At every stage of conscience there has been this constraint, the conception of some law which it behoved men to obey. That is why conscience, even when imperfect, has been to the world the sacred flame which it dare not let die, a divine light, part of the Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

Bishop Butler, in his great sermons on Human Nature, after establishing the supremacy of the moral element in life, sums up in these words: 'Nothing can be more evident than that, exclusive of revelation, man cannot be considered as a creature left by his Maker to act at random, and live at large up to the extent of his natural power, as passion, humour, wilfulness, happen to

carry him; which is the condition brute creatures are in; but that from his make, constitution, or nature, he is in the strictest and most proper sense a law to himself. He hath the rule of right within: what is wanting is only that he honestly attend to it.' It is not necessary to go into disputed questions as to the origin and growth of conscience in order to understand and accept this sense of obligation. Practically the conscience means the moral sentiment which is an instinct in us. It is our recognition of, and obligation to, a higher law than our own will or pleasure. To enlighten and educate and train our conscience represents the great moral task of life. If we never honestly attend to this sphere of our nature we are not dealing fairly by our own powers. If care and cultivation are needed elsewhere, how can we assume that here nothing is required but a policy of drift? Rather, much more important is it to have a trained and tender conscience than to have a learned and educated mind; for the direction of life and its real safety depend most of all on moral sanctions. 'There is something very great and blessed as well as inevitable,' says Rothe in his *Still Hours*, 'in the fact that our mind is in agreement and harmony

with the eternal and inviolable laws of the world and its Creator. The bringing about of this harmony in himself is one of the chief duties in the self-training of the individual.'

How is the conscience to be trained? It is done by obedience to its dictates, by responding promptly to our sense of right, by a life surrendered to duty. Obedience is the test of our advance in moral life. Conscientiousness is the only proof of conscience, as faithfulness is the proof of faith and service is the proof of love. And obedience is not only the test of moral attainment, but it is also the *method* of attaining. Enlightenment through obedience is the approved religious method. The blessing comes to those who are in the way of the commandments. We often reverse the process, and concern ourselves with difficulties to be explained and questions to be answered and contradictions to be reconciled. We begin by wanting to know rather than by wanting to obey. We make religion too much a matter of opinion, of knowledge, of enlightenment, and think we do well to refuse to go a step further than we can see. We ask, What is truth? when it would be more to the point if we asked oftener, What is duty?

Truth is reached through obedience. Loyalty to conscience brings light. The constant effort to do what is right gives the spiritual discernment to recognise what is right. There are more pressing questions than the speculative ones — questions raised to every soul of us by uneasy consciences and turbulent wills, by unfulfilled duty and unworthy lives. When we are honest with ourselves the questions that trouble us to the heart are not how to reconcile this with that, but how to reconcile what we are with what we ought to be.

Now, conscience is a practical guide for the conduct of life, not for settling speculative questions. Our real difficulties are practical, not speculative. We may cheat ourselves into the belief that if we had only some philosophical or doctrinal doubt settled we would have got rid of all our difficulties. These are not the things that are keeping us from what we acknowledge to be our highest life. It is a common expedient to get rid of the obligation of our practical conscience by perplexing ourselves with what are called cases of conscience. It is usually a form of self-deception. We often want an excuse for fulfilling our lower desires. We

pretend we cannot separate right from wrong and we are in straits how to reconcile the facts of life with the facts of religion. We try to mystify ourselves sometimes by showing that there are two sides to every question. The truth is this, that often we seek excuse to lead a lower moral life than our conscience would let us. The worst of it is that the very keenness of conscience against which we struggle is a proof that we might help the world to truer life, while we are trying to cozen our soul into the belief that our standard is absurd and morbid.

In the hour of temptation the one practical rule is to cling to conscience as to life. Passion draws a man into its smothering folds and in weakness he gives in, believing that thus he will get rest from the struggle and rest from conscience. He is only piling up the fires of his own hell. In the heat of temptation our only chance lies in conscience as representing God to us. The question is not the abstract one as to the absolute reliability of conscience, but this practical and particular evil against which conscience protests. In spite of all sophistry, duty in this particular thing is clear. There is a leading of God, a place where he meets man and prompts

to the higher life, and that place is the sanctuary of conscience.

Further, conscience needs to be enlightened. It has to be trained by accepting all the personal and social obligations of our situation, and to be reinforced by the fruits of knowledge and experience. Conscience needs to be guided by thought and judgment and sensitive feeling, or it may become an organ of wrong instead of right —and this although it is really active and responsive. An unenlightened conscience may be very scrupulous and exacting and susceptible to impressions, and all the time be an engine of evil in the life and in the world. It may become bigoted and fanatical, making a man self-opinionative and harsh and even cruel. In obedience to conscience men have perpetrated hideous crimes because conscience was perverted. A difference of opinion has often been made an excuse for censorious judgments and for cruel oppression. Conscientiousness is a great quality of moral living, but it needs to be informed and enlightened by knowledge and to be made tender by deep feeling. A narrow conception of duty may thus rob a man of his legitimate influence over others. Goodness needs thought

and reason before she can take her regal place. Goodness means the sanctification of all the powers of our nature. We have here another illustration of the need of proportional growth, for like other capacities, conscience cannot be made the most of if taken singly by itself.

Conscience needs to be educated through reflection, as only thus can duty grow clear. Conscience becomes more sure in its discrimination as it is enlightened by knowledge and reflection. Coleridge has a profoundly true comment on this point. 'Few are so obdurate, few have sufficient strength of character to be able to draw forth an evil tendency or immoral practice into distinct consciousness, without bringing it in the same moment before an awakened conscience. But for this very reason it becomes the duty of conscience to form the mind to a habit of distinct consciousness. An unreflecting Christian walks in twilight amongst snares and pitfalls.'[1] Mental and moral growth go together. A forward moral impulse serves also the highest purposes of intellect. A true and deep religious character carries with it the quickening of the whole being, among other

[1] *Aids to Reflection.*

things enlarging the mental horizon. Often men of no formal education have attained an intellectual outlook from their sincere religious faith, which has given them sympathy with all large thoughts and all high purposes.

Conversely, intellectual culture should develop moral character. A trained intelligence can deal with cases of conscience, with difficulties of moral choice, and should find its way easily to wise and consistent decisions. When intellectual development is accompanied by moral growth it gains in richness and security. Milton dedicated himself early to the great task which he felt to be his portion in life, to leave something so written to after times as they should not willingly let die. As he strove to qualify himself for his vocation of poet he laboured strenuously to equip his mind fully ; but he saw deeper into the sources of all great achievement, and knew 'that he who would not be frustrate of his hope to write well hereafter in laudable things ought himself to be a true poem ; that is, a composition and pattern of the best and honourablest things ; not presuming to sing high praises of heroic men or famous cities unless he have in himself the experience and the practice of all that which is

praiseworthy.' His self-cultivation included a deep moral purpose, a determination to do nothing that would taint his mind or blunt his conscience. Few poets or artists have given themselves so completely to such an ideal as Milton, and, as Dr. Johnson said, it is from such a fervid and pious promise might be expected the *Paradise Lost.* A man of genius may be the victim of appetite or passion and yet create some great and beautiful works, but the character which his life is creating will leave its mark upon his work and will weaken his capacity. In the long run the gains of intellect are only secured and conserved by moral character.

We cannot deal with conscience apart from *the will;* for the moral choice of life is bound up both with conscience and will. If it is necessary to distinguish between these two powers, we can say that will is conscience put into action. The sphere of our own free will is the arena of all moral fights, and at every point of moral choice the conscience makes itself heard. In practical ethics all action must be regarded as the fruit of the will. We sometimes speak in common language of doing a thing against our will, but that is only an inaccuracy of speech. We may

do an act against our judgment, and against what we admit should be our will, against the better part of our nature, but the will is the responsible agent of the act. We may, and do, often deceive ourselves, thinking that the citadel of our will is intact though we have surrendered to evil in life, by pretending that a course of action is due not at all to our will but to some necessity of environment. But that only means that the particular motive or temptation has advanced sufficiently strong inducements to capture the power of will. When Romeo went to the old apothecary to purchase poison without disguising that the poison was to be used for an illegal object, Shakespeare makes the apothecary give the poison for the sake of the reward, using this as a salve to his conscience, 'My poverty and not my will consents.' Nay, it was against his conscience, against his better judgment, but not against his will. The temptation was too strong for his will, and the selling of the poison to be used for suicide was his will. The poverty was only the motive which drove his will in that direction. In all questions of morals we come back to the will, and fasten responsibility there.

So all-important is the will in the moral judgment of a man, that we can say that according to the character of the will is the character of the life. Even in worldly business we know how men are separated into classes by differences of will. One man is of what we call a strong will, knowing what he means and wants, and usually gets it. The man of irresolute will is also of feckless life. The will must be trained if we are to have any real mastery over our lives. We must practice decisions, to avoid the vice of irresolution. We know the value of a resolute will, not only in practical affairs, but in the things of intellect, where mental concentration seems to depend on it. In moral culture also it is essential, and means the trained ability to reject certain thoughts and courses. This is the great strategy against temptation, to call up other reserve forces and turn the enemy's flank by different thoughts and nobler imaginations. Also, when conscience bears witness to a duty, let the will set about performing it, and both will grow in strength.

As intellect is based on moral character, so character is fed by religion. The gains of moral life are secured by a reach forward into the

spiritual life. We touch here the subject of our next chapter, the Culture of Spirit. Only thus can the conscience be fully illumined and educated, and the will be strengthened and inspired. Experience shows to all of us the truth in the old parable of life which represents a man offered two alternatives, the allurement of the ideal and the enticement of the real. State them how we will, the alternatives are the facts of life to us. We can only truly fulfil ourselves through loyalty to the moral law and adherence to the ideal. If we follow simply and sincerely we are not long left in darkness or in doubt as to duty, and one of the rewards is the joy of a good conscience. 'Have a good conscience,' says Thomas à Kempis, 'and thou shalt ever have joy.' Well, even if there is not a very jubilant joy through over-much struggle, there will be at least some measure of peace.

CULTURE OF SPIRIT

'The soul of all culture is the culture of the soul.'

— BUSHNELL.

CHAPTER IX

CULTURE OF SPIRIT

LIFE in its deepest sense in the Bible is more than the space of time between birth and death, and more than material existence and the continuance of the vital forces. It combines all the functions of being. It finds a due place for all the powers and needs of man. Life means, besides the material existence, all that makes man distinctive. It is the fulness of all his powers, the completion of all his possibilities. In addition to the material and the mental there is the spiritual. A man is not said to live in this sense unless he has part in the life of God. It speaks of his entering into life when he enters into relationship with God. Religion has to do with the whole life, every power and every detail, but it means first of all a higher principle of life which recreates the whole. Not merely to draw the breath, not merely to perform the functions of animal existence, and not even to have a com-

plete intellectual and emotional development, but to be spiritually-minded is life. Can we be said to have truly lived so far? When we realise this deeper demand of our own nature and our clamant spiritual needs left unsatisfied, we understand Augustine's lament after searching into his heart and describing what he was at his worst and at his best, 'Such was my life. But was it life, O my God?'

Commonplace psychology ignores this spiritual sphere, or speaks of the facts in this region of human life as morbid, though for the credit of this science modern psychologists are beginning to accept these facts of the soul with the same reverence as they accept other facts. They are coming to see that this subject cannot be dismissed by disparaging it in comparison with the seemingly clear-cut truths of the exact sciences. It is not enough to reject the claim of religion on the ground that it is so vague and indefinite, or that it is impossible to reach a consensus of opinion on every point of religion. The higher a human faculty is, the more liable it is to be abused. The mistakes that can be made about it increase in proportion to its delicacy of nature. The finer the machinery,

the more mischief can coarse, blundering fingers make. It is only to be expected that in the spiritual sphere this should be specially seen. That is one reason why it seems impossible to get unanimity in religion. Our sects are often the exaggeration of different sides of truth. In the intellectual life of man the confusion is great enough, seen in the differences of opinion on any question political or otherwise, and in the difficulty of arriving at clear views on any subject. The possibility of error is increased in dealing with the still higher sphere of spirit. The mistakes of religion have been many, the superstitions, the foolish notions, the undue prominence of particular phases. So apparent is this danger and so palpable have been the blunders, that some have declared that truth here cannot be discovered, that religion is not for us, that God is unknowable to man; in other words, that it is better to live in the lower plane where we have less chance to err. This is the agnostic position. But if the soul is to be put out of court on such reasoning, on the same ground also should the intellect; for here too are found error and mistake. Reason is not an infallible guide, as a dis-

tracted world can testify. Indeed, there are men who have given up thought for precisely the same reason that some thinkers have given up religion. The mental life can be denied as reasonably as the spiritual. The true and even scientific attitude is for us to live up to our capacities. The very glimmerings and distortions and reflections and mirage are evidences that there is light. We need patience and humble seeking and careful correction of error in spiritual truth as in scientific truth. Here, too, the soul that seeks finds.

Now it is a fact of history and life that man is capable of spiritual training, which is something other than mere mental acquirements. The agnostic position is unscientific; for it is to prejudge and set an arbitrary limit to man's possibilities. There may be an obscurantism of science as well as of religion. The true attitude begins by accepting the facts; and religion is a fact of history and experience. It is not enough to wave aside airily this whole question of spiritual intuition because it happens to be mysterious. Still worse is it to pass over all the experiences that speak of intercourse between the spirit of man and of God, as if

they meant only some form of disease. Sabatier, in his *Life of the Apostle Paul*, asks, 'Where could we find a more wholesome mental constitution than belonged to Socrates or to Luther; where a more true and delicate conscience than that of Joan of Arc? And yet we know that their spiritual life had its source far beyond the sphere of pure reason. If this faculty of mystical exaltation is a disease, we should have to acknowledge that Jesus, despite the harmony of His nature, possessed an unsound mind; for He had His moments of ecstasy — sacred moments which a coarse, vulgar understanding profanes by calling them hallucinations. No; this is not the sign of a morbid disposition. In truth he is much rather the sick man who has never known any state but that of dry, cold reason. What else is religion? what is prayer and adoration but an exaltation of spirit?'

We may call spiritual qualities only the finer attribute of mind if we like, but we do not thus shift the problem raised by the facts. And whenever we admit the facts of spiritual experience, immediately duty emerges. The duty regarding spirit is as plain as duty regarding body or mind. We do not stop to ask whether

we can really understand facts essentially before we will accept anything as fact. We do not stop to ask whether we can know absolute truth before we try to find out what things are true. Why should we refuse to entertain the thought of God, because we cannot know God in His essence and nature? If men through all these centuries have known some form of communion with the divine, can it be that now at last it is all a delusion? To hold such a view of history would be to despair of all knowledge and progress. Browning makes Cleon ask this question —

> The grapes which dye thy wine are richer far,
> Through culture, than the wild wealth of the rock;
> The suave plum than the savage-tasted drupe;
> The pastured honey-bee drops choicer sweet;
> The flowers turn double and the leaves turn flowers;
> What, and the soul alone deteriorates?

To hold such a view is to deny all history and to deny all law of progress. Religion is conscious union with God; but whether we are conscious of it or not, our whole life is bathed in the infinite life. Wherever there is a door out from the self of man, God stands at the door and knocks. In every region of our nature there is this contact with the infinite, in the ideal of knowledge, in the ideal of holiness, in every

aspiration towards that which is beyond. We are enswathed and suffused by the infinite life of God, and until we enter into conscious relationship with the divine, we are incomplete and imperfect.

Duty comes to us the moment we admit this fact. That is to say, a man is not justified in saying that he does not happen to possess this peculiar organ of religious knowledge, that he does not have these spiritual experiences, and therefore it is not for him to bother about it. He is not justified in adopting this attitude, for one thing because it is not true. He constantly uses the very faculties in his relations with his fellows which can be raised to the higher pitch that will give him a conscious relation also to God. The carnal mind which St. Paul speaks about is not a different mind from the spiritual, but is the same mind vitalised, so to speak. The carnal is not hopelessly divided from the spiritual, separated by an impassable gulf. When St. Paul made this distinction between the carnal and the spiritual,[1] he speaks of the former as babes who have not grown up into their possibilities. St. Paul, in other words, affirms man's natural affinity to God. The organ may be rudi-

[1] 1 Cor. iii. 1, 2.

mentary, but it is there. The babe, if it assimilates suitable food, will grow up out of the period of babyhood into manhood. The germ of the spiritual life is in us all, and will grow if it gets a chance of growth. We must come like children simply and humbly depending on God, if we would see the Kingdom; and when we come and make the venture of faith we do see. We are ushered into the life of spirit, and have the assurance of the reality of the spiritual world. It is spiritually discerned. Faith is the instrument of spiritual discernment; and when the discernment is reached, all life becomes a holy shrine, where the soul serves at the altar priest-like; and when faith does its perfect work, there comes down over the life that sweet summer-calm of spirit which some have known, and peace clings to the garments like a fragrance. Faith is the instrument of spiritual discernment, as knowledge is the instrument of mental culture. The just *live* by faith. Religion is this exaltation of spirit above the things of sense, above even the things of intellect, the apprehension of the unseen and eternal.

If a man were to live ever in this golden light,

if he were to submit all his being to God, thought, affections, desires, ambitions, he could indeed, as the Apostle claims, judge all things spiritual, and refuse to be judged of any man. Who of us stands on this calm height, so stands to the world that we are outside its judgment, because above it, and can be overlooked by none except by God? The spiritual in us is overborne, overweighted by the animal. The soul may be said to be in abeyance in us, in a state of suspended animation, when it is not in immediate danger of being asphyxiated for want of air. It is one function of all religious methods and ordinances to remind us of the imperious claims of the soul, to recall us to our duty regarding it, to convince us that we are throwing away our birthright, and maiming our whole nature, if we are neglecting our highest life.

The culture of the spirit does not mean some larger and sweeter pleasure merely, but has a practical bearing on the whole of life. It must be admitted that there is very little moral dynamic in intellect. It is often a moral preservative, and can help to fill up the life with good, but it cannot initiate. As mere negation is not enough, we need a power which will lift

the whole nature out of the region of evil. A principle of life is needed. Reason in this sphere can at best only provide a suitable and pure environment for a larger life. That is good so far, but we need something to beget the higher life in us. We cannot conquer the evils of the lower life except by living in the higher. True morality comes, not by the mortifying of the flesh, but by the vitalising of the spirit. The lower clinging sins fall from us when we rise. They cannot live in the rarefied atmosphere above them. If it is borne in on a man that to make his life truly livable he must abstain from some habit, let him abstain; but for ultimate victory he must not rest in the negative triumph; he must get out of the region of the struggle, and if possible forget it. It is dangerous to live with a hungry appetite, for the more it is mortified the more hungry it becomes. If the evil we have for the time conquered still engrosses our thoughts and fills our minds, the danger is not past. The danger is past when we have outlived it, and that can only be achieved by a spiritual advance. The struggle against temptation is the clearing of the decks for subsequent action. It is necessary in view of

the action, but in itself is not true conquest. Conquest comes from spiritual-mindedness. If we move forward, we step out of the way of many of our difficulties. A reach forward into faith removes the discrepancies of knowledge. Entrance into the spiritual destroys the power of many former doubts. Usually it is not explanation we need, but a new standpoint.

For some the kingdom has to be entered through struggle and soul-travail, through darkness and doubt; but the finest spirits seem to come to the kingdom without that convulsive ordeal, without anxious inquiry even into the foundation of their faith. They lose their hearts simply and easily to the beauty of holiness. They see the vision, and are not disobedient, but follow after. Their native piety of soul gives them instinctively the spiritual outlook on the world and life. They do not ask for proofs and evidences and laborious argumentation; for truth seems to evidence itself to their devout minds. There is a lesson in this to all that religion is not apprehended logically, and we can easily over-estimate the value of our ordinary apparatus for acquiring knowledge. However the awakening comes, through the severe birth pangs of

spiritual life, or the simpler way of growth, we realise that it is a higher stage. Consistent and persistent faith gives even a distinction of manner. There comes naturally a certain separateness and aloofness from the trivial. The soul that is accustomed to deal with larger things cannot become engrossed and absorbed in petty things. Men could not grow passionate about trifles if they had larger causes at heart. Most of our bitter religious disputes are due to lack of spiritual culture. The man who has been in the presence of God, cannot easily descend to hair-splitting argument and barren theology.

How are we to attain to this spiritual discernment amid all the entanglement of the carnal life? If we desire to possess culture of mind, we must lay hold of the instruments of mental education. So here in this sphere, if we are really in earnest about it, we must use all the available means of grace. We do not suffer from ignorance of these common things, to provide which is the chief duty of the Church — the value of holy meditation, of praise and prayer, of devotional culture, of submission of the life to conscience and God's will. Rather, we need to feel the imperial note of duty regard-

ing all this, and to realise that we are bound to cultivate this spiritual discernment which we possess as men. Perhaps we will listen to the poet's description of these common instruments of spiritual culture, when we might dismiss as an oft-told tale a statement of religious method in prose. In the *Excursion*, Wordsworth makes the old Wanderer speak of the difficulty of maintaining heights of spirit, how beset we are with the things that make for decline of spiritual power, how we are unequally matched with custom, time, and domineering faculties of sense, and further entangled by temptations and vanities, and ill-governed passions and discontent and care; and he asks —

> What then remains? — To seek
> Those helps for his occasions ever near
> Who lacks not will to use them; vows renewed
> On the first motion of a holy thought;
> Vigils of contemplation; praise; and prayer —
> A stream, which from the fountain of the heart
> Issuing, however feebly, nowhere flows
> Without access of unexpected strength.
> But above all the victory is most sure
> For him who, seeking faith by virtue, strives
> To yield entire submission to the law
> Of conscience — conscience reverenced and obeyed,
> As God's most intimate presence in the soul,
> And His most perfect image in the world.

If we take this side of our nature seriously, we will use all these methods of spiritual culture.

All the masters of the devotional life, for instance, lay emphasis on prayer. Perhaps the reason why we lack the atmosphere of prayer in our lives is because we do not make the opportunities. We must consciously and consistently seek to live the separated life, submitting ourselves to the discipline of heart and will which prayer involves. No faculty is expected to grow without the suitable environment and fit means. Business capacity is developed by a business training, and suitable opportunities are as much needed for the soul life. We must make the occasions. The making of a saint is not the work of a day, any more than the making of a scholar. The devoted life is the fruit of devotion: piety comes from prayer. If we would have moments on the mount, we must toil up the hill's rugged side. It is the business of a man who has the spiritual ideal to fix his mind on heavenly things. To gain the sweet strong mood of calmness, we must develop the contemplative life. We must confess that we have little of the devotional spirit among us.

Even our religious life is largely a matter of activities, and what we call Christian work. There never were more organisation, more machinery, more conventions, and conferences and committees; but even in the interests of this side of religion, we need more attention to the inward life. Our Christian activities cannot keep themselves going; they must be fed by blood from the pulsing heart of faith. The cold will numb the limbs when the heart slackens its beat. The seed which springs up so quickly and strongly will wither away because it has no root. Devotional culture requires the wise and constant use of means as much as mental culture does. As we recognise the cultured mind with its wide and accurate reading, with its careful study and observation, so we recognise the cultured soul with its peace and grace and its 'harvest of a quiet eye.' This separated life is no affectation of manner. The most spiritual men have no pietistic airs, and are to be found in the market and in the street. They perhaps do not easily speak of the matters of faith, but they have taken the crooked places of their heart to God, and had them made straight there.

Even here, in the highest culture of all, we have to guard against error, and have to bring it into line with life. We see in the early Church how the spiritual commotion from the influx of new life created great dangers, and the Church had to be guarded from excess and error and mistaken standards. The Corinthian Church, as we gather from its condition reflected in St. Paul's Epistles, suffered from the fever of an excessive vitality, and was beset by the temptations of its highly strung state. They were inclined to value the ecstasy of visions and to despise the quiet calm walk of faith. They were living in an atmosphere of spiritual excitement, and sometimes even neglected the ordinary morality of the Christian life. Never was there more needed the strong sane guidance of St. Paul, who combined a wonderful practical genius with his perfervid religious enthusiasm. One of the greatest dangers was the temptation to pride and self-glorification, which of course led to rivalry and unfriendly criticism of others. This is an inevitable danger of all spiritual exaltation and indeed of all spiritual culture. The temptations seem to increase in subtlety and seductiveness the nearer we approach the centre of life —

> The soul mounting higher to God, comes no nigher,
> But the arch-fiend Pride mounts at her side.

If a man thinks himself to be specially spiritual or endowed with peculiar and exceptional gifts, the temptation at once arises to self-complacency if not to arrogant self-conceit. St. Paul guarded against this by reminding the Corinthians that all gifts come from God, not of merit but of grace, and are given not for their own sake, not even for the sake exclusively of those who are favoured with them, but for the larger sake of the Church and the world. The test of a gift is its power of service. The essential difference between men lies not in their different gifts but in their use of them. That is to say, it is a difference of character, not of capacity. In the Christian economy there is no room for personal glorification and the clashing of vulgar ambitions; for life is not judged by success but by service.

It seems remarkable that spiritually-minded men should need to be warned against the temptation to pride, since these two things are incompatible. The one will kill the other, and they cannot really co-exist together. But we can see where the danger lurks for the unwary

soul — 'I saw in my dream that at the very gate of heaven there was a door to hell.' This is a pitfall for all who dabble in the false spiritualisms that have always attractions for certain temperaments. It comes as a delicate flattery to a man that he is privileged to enter into mysteries shut to others, that he is specially selected as a medium of occult influences from the spiritual world. Vanity is a leaven that works mischief in every sphere of human life, but nowhere is it so deadly as in this highest sphere of the spiritual. In the Corinthian Church great stress was laid on such apparent marvels as the speaking with tongues, and the humbler speech that could edify was looked down on as inferior. Paul scarified this standard of valuation with keen sarcasm, and did not hesitate to pronounce their esteemed gift of tongues as mere gibberish if there was no reasonable interpretation. He drew a picture of the whole Church gathered in one place and all speaking with tongues. If a simple unlearned person or unbeliever should come in amidst the babel, he asked what would be thought of the proceedings, and answered by the form of his question, 'Will they not say

that ye are mad?' He insisted on bringing all such gifts to the test of the practical and the useful, and reversed the whole scale of judging gifts. In the Christian life there stands first, not the mystical in faith but the practical, not the seeing of visions but the humble following of Christ.

The same subtle temptation awaits all false spiritualisms with their esoteric doctrines, with their pretended insight into the spiritual world closed to the mass of men, their shadowy mysticism which the ordinary mind cannot grasp. Of all spiritual experience we must ask how it leads out in practice, how it issues in daily life, how it affects character and conduct. Has it led to new insight into the needs and tasks of life? Has it brought new moral truth into light, or reinforced some new aspect of the old truth? Has it inspired to larger love and a nobler sense of duty? This appeal to practice must be made all along the line of spiritual life. There is a swift and sure penalty for all forms of religious exaggeration in the deterioration of the spirit itself, working as we have seen often in conceit of self and its usual accompaniment, censoriousness of others. In the same

way the disease of introspection can only be cured by bringing faith out into the light, by judging the tree by the fruit. All the authorities in this sphere speak of the dangers of mere high-flying devotionalism without the steadying influence of conduct. 'It is not possible for thee, my son,' says Thomas à Kempis, 'to continue in the uninterrupted enjoyment of spiritual fervour, nor always to stand upon the heights of pure contemplation.' It is so easy to make feelings a substitute for practical obedience instead of making them an inspiration to obey. There is ever a danger of making religion a matter of emotion and not a matter of moral reverence, without sense of awe and mystery and without the compulsion of conscience. To trust merely to sublime feelings and high states of soul without judging faith by actual faithfulness will infect the whole spiritual life with insincerity and an ever-weakening sense of unreality.

We come, then, to this further principle that spiritual-mindedness must be tested by the moral conscience as well as by practical life. The spiritual can never be divorced from the moral. The commandments of God remain,

and by them we must judge our spiritual state. A man must not violate his moral perception even in the supposed interests of religion. The spiritual life is inseparably related to character, and all spiritual truth must be tested by conscience, by moral law, and if found wanting there must be amended. F. W. Newman in his *Phases of Faith* relates an incident which came under his own knowledge of a man educated and thoughtful who became a convert to the Irving miracles. After several years he totally renounced them as a miserable delusion because he found that a system of false doctrine was growing up and was propped by them. He was led astray by intellectually seeing nothing false in the Irvingite position: he was brought right by trusting to his moral perceptions. We can only enter into the region of religion, and remain in it, by moral sympathy. It begins as an act of self-surrender, but must then grow up into the life.

A further principle for our guidance in the difficulties of this region is that the reason should be taken along with the spirit. In the matter of speaking with tongues, for example, Paul declared that a gift must be to edification, and also

that it must be intelligible. If a man speaks with tongues it is of no earthly use, unless he can interpret it and make it plain and understandable. For a true and useful spiritual life the reason should be satisfied as well as the emotions. Sane and sober judgment is needed. 'If I pray in an unknown tongue my spirit prayeth but my understanding is unfruitful.' This demand for balance of judgment would cure much religious extravagance and one-sidedness in the acceptance of truth. Scripture itself should teach us balance and proportion. A great truth can be laid hold on in a one-sided way and driven to extreme. It may issue in some blind fanaticism, or in some dark mysticism. It is sometimes assumed that a religious exercise is stamped peculiarly spiritual if it is manifestly irrational. Such gets no countenance from the virile thinking of St. Paul, who insists that the reason may be a vehicle of the spirit. Much play has been made on the distinction between religion and theology, the one as the life of the soul, the other as the intellectual presentation of that life. It is a distinction which sometimes needs to be strenuously maintained; for religion is the one important reality of which theology is

the scientific study. At the same time, religion cannot be left in vagueness, but must be clothed with a body of systematic thought. The mind of man cannot allow itself to be waved off from the most important region of life. No religion, however real and vivid in its personal appeal, can be safe if the intellect has not been secured in its service. Religion as an experience precedes theology, as natural life precedes the science of zoology, but it is a necessity of the mind to attempt to bring into order all that human life involves.

The truth to keep firm hold of is that man is a real unity, and that the spiritual cannot be cut off and considered by itself as if it had no relations to body or mind or morals. This interrelation of all the parts of our being is a fact which we dare not lose sight of in religion as in what are considered the lower levels of life. The contemplative and the practical, the inner and the outer, are connected with subtle bonds, and one side cannot be neglected without the whole life suffering. We sometimes speak as if the soul were some ghostly entity that could be attended to by itself and nursed into richness of nature; and we have often longed to have leisure

to pay heed to the soul's life by itself, using all the approved methods of cultivating spiritual mindedness. It is a mistake which is responsible for many an error. We must make the whole life spiritual, and carry up all parts of our being together. We suffer seriously by our sectional experiments, but nowhere so seriously as in the matter of religion. F. D. Maurice's experience is that of many another: 'I dream sometimes of times when one might have more inward and less outward business; but after forty years' experience I find that the inward is not better in my case but worse for want of the outward, and that I really seek God most when I need His help to enable me to do what He has set me to do.'

It comes to this, that devotion like everything else must be tested by life. The practical must always be used to restrain or at least to correct the mystical. There is a mysticism which is alien to the Christian faith. There is a mysticism which is a morbid growth, which might be called almost spiritual sensualism; for it is as much a thing of the senses as of the soul. It is divorced from action. Its spiritual ecstasies are enjoyed without a thought of the duty and service which should follow. True religion has

always an eye to the practical. We should be suspicious of the piety which does not know service, of the prayer which does not lead to work, of the mysticism which begins and ends in its own emotions. If a man think himself spiritual, let him take knowledge of the practical demands made upon him by his special profession, judging his experiences by reason and by conscience and by the practical results in his life. It is not an argument against spiritual ideals, but for the control and education of them and their growth in true grace.

We cannot forget also that the very methods which are necessary to secure and maintain spiritual insight can themselves become corrupt, and sin can mingle in our most holy things. The accredited means we use for spiritual culture, approved by all who are in a position to advise — prayer, solitude, meditation, devotional reading — all are liable to abuse and need to be carefully guarded against mistake. We can have all the methods and seasons of prayer and yet not have the heart brought into subjection.

> The river is bound by the ice-king's thong ;
> Below, the current runs swift and strong.

It is no valid argument against prayer that it

can be misused, but it is an argument for a renewed serious endeavour to use it rightly. The same is true of the other methods and aids to devotion. Robertson of Brighton tells in a letter how he stopped devotional reading for a time, when he learned that devotional feelings may be very distinct from uprightness and purity of life. He had evidently come across cases where he judged that these feelings were strangely allied to the animal nature, seemingly the result of a warm temperament, and were, as he says, guides to hell under the form of angels of light. These cases disgusted him, and made him suspect feelings which he had hitherto cherished as the holiest, and produced a reaction. He saw that the basest feelings lie very near to our highest, and that they pass into one another by insensible transitions. 'The true lesson is to watch, suspect, and guard aspirations after good, not to drown them as spurious.' In spite of this temporary disgust he felt the need which devotional books supply, and determined to begin them again; for 'our affections must be nurtured in the Highest, or else our whole life flags and droops.'

This is a region where one is afraid of dis-

couraging any, since few enough seriously attempt any spiritual culture at all; but we will be safe if we pay heed to the warning that every gift means added responsibility, and every privilege is meant for duty. Our Lord's example shows us the mean between the extremes of the purely contemplative and the purely active life. Devotion is designed to fit us more truly for the tasks and needs of life. The still hour is for the stormy hours: communion is for life: prayer is for work. The devotional life finds its meaning and purpose in active service. By their fruits ye shall know them.

But there can be no fruit at all unless the branch abide in the vine. This is last of all and first of all. Without God the soul is only an empty possibility; He is needed to vitalise it. The appeal of this book is for a completer culture than most of us have hitherto attempted. We are daily living below our conscience, and below our convictions, and far below our privileges; and all because we do not live our life with continual reference to God, with thoughts, affections, hopes, desires circling towards Him, as a bird hovers to its nest. In spite of all the dangers to which we have called attention, we

must see that we are not fulfilling the end of our being, if we have no unseen life hid with Christ in God. We must see that to be spiritually minded is the only life. The saintly M'Cheyne said, 'It is not so much great talents God blesses, as great likeness to Christ.' This is our great ideal and example, and sums up to us all methods of spiritual culture. He is so much the Master of the spiritual world that when we mention faith, we can only mean faith as it is in Jesus. He is the way of access to the Father; He is the assurance to us of eternal things, the sign of the invisible; He opens the door of the spiritual world to us. To be in union with Him is life; to have His mind in us is to be spiritually minded. The Christian task is the practice of the presence of Christ.

My soul, wait thou upon God, with the holy meditation which makes a man calm at the heart, and strong for all the needs of living. There is rest at the centre. Thou losest nothing if thou losest not God. Let the world go past with its dust and noise, with its fret and fume. My soul, wait thou upon God.